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## DISCUSSION BOOKS

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## THE ADULT CLASS

*No. 30*



# THE ADULT CLASS

*by*

A. J. J. RATCLIFF



THOMAS NELSON AND SONS LTD

LONDON EDINBURGH PARIS MELBOURNE

TORONTO AND NEW YORK



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## INTRODUCTION

ALL teaching concerns itself with the Giver, the Matter, and the Receiver. To that extent all teaching is one. More simply, all teaching issues from a teaching personality. On this account any one interested in teaching of any kind may find something addressed to him in this book. The stress is on the teaching of the adolescent and the adult, but the teacher of children faces many of the same problems. There is a good deal for the Evening School teacher, part- or whole-time ; also for the lecturer (Workers' Educational Association, or other), and the various brands of supervisor-cum-teacher leading diverse activities like those of Reading Circles, Wireless Discussion Groups, Settlement Study Circles, the Boys' Brigade, and Scouts.

The general matters treated in this book apply to any form of teaching and class-leading ; but many of the special matters apply chiefly to teachers whose subject and aims are controlled by outside syllabuses and examinations. Even there the general teacher will find something to agree with or take exception to ; for educational theory notoriously excites partisanship, divergence of view, experiment.

Indeed there can be no reader who will agree with everything the writer says. It is, however, a chief aim of this series of books to spur the reader to criticise his own and the author's judgments, and to discuss matters

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freely with friends. The object of the present author is, in fact, simply to make the teacher more teaching-conscious, and the man or woman who has undertaken the leadership of a reading circle or discussion group more thoughtful about his task. This book is a sort of tabloid discussion training course, suggestive, not dogmatic—at least in intention. Let the reader disagree and dissent when and where he chooses. Dissent is a sign of living response.

Even the most complacent among us would hardly claim that all is ideal in the teaching world. There is room for any book that seriously tries to get to the heart of what teaching is, and to provoke thought about it. But the best defence of such a book is that the lectures which gave rise to it in the first place discovered in various groups of part-time teachers an amazing and pathetic hunger for guidance. There are unquestionably thousands of men and women in this country who keenly feel the need of organized advice on the teacher and his job. And some of them are not teachers. . . .

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## CHAPTER I.—LEARNING TO TEACH

### *1. Function of this Book*

EVERY one of us as teacher has three mirrors : observers who give us a reflection of our quality. The first and most sensitively accurate is the class. Little about us escapes their inexorable eye. If their response in attention and work is good, we can be pretty sure we are not teaching badly. The second mirror is any outside person who sees us at work and knows our students—a colleague, inspector, headmaster, friend. He is usually ready to tell us our faults, if not our virtues. He labels us a failure, or a moderate or a good teacher, and gives us his own tips for improving. The third mirror is . . . ourselves. We have a shrewd idea whether we are succeeding or not. Bad attention, poor work, lack of respect take the vitals out of us, and we know by a defeated feeling that something must be done about it. Satisfaction, dissatisfaction : these mark the effective man or the misfit. One or another mirror, of course, may flatter, or needlessly deflate ; but the others are there to correct it, and compel us to realize the true picture.

At a teachers' training college the three mirrors are put into regular and deliberate operation. Each student

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faces specimen classes and tries to teach them specimen lessons. An Education tutor looks on, makes reports, and gives advice. A band of fellow-students also looks on, and tries its prentice hand at criticism and counsel. The teacher himself makes notes on himself. So his self-knowledge and rating as a teacher tend to become accurate and complete. And the process of self-improvement can begin.

Admitted, the conditions are artificial. The classes know the teacher is only practising. The lessons are of a model type for which there might not be occasion in actual schools. The tutor has his eye so close to the object that he is apt to magnify method out of its true proportion. Even with these defects the system works, and teaching skill is satisfactorily developed. Outside in the real teaching world the student may soon change his tactics, discarding much of what he has been taught ; but the fact remains that he would not have become the teacher he finally is without the impress of his special training. The college made him radically conscious of method and personality, ready for self-adaptation in any new surroundings. He can later truly say to the tyro, " Young man, I have forgotten more than you ever knew " ; for both to learn and to forget have been valuable to him.

Clearly a book cannot form a substitute for such a lengthy course of training, with its lectures on method and psychology as well as its criticism lessons. It cannot even rival the short courses given at summer schools by the B.B.C. to train Wireless Discussion Group Leaders in a week of talks and practices. For it cannot supply practice or tutor. But it can be a kind of wise friend who brings up for discussion the customary problems of

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the teacher, and supplies some shadow of a portrait of what the good teacher is like. It can help the beginner to see the wide scope of teaching, and its inexhaustible possibilities.

That is what this book attempts to be and to do.

Only as in other spheres so in teaching, one man's meat is another's poison. There are no final, perfect models and methods. All depends so much on the particular person, job, and aim. Plato saw that it was one skill to know how to do a thing, and another altogether to apply that skill in the world: Henry may know how to make good tennis rackets, but it is Bill who knows how to sell them.

So to use this book with effect, a cursory reading should be only a preliminary. There should be discussion with others, self-examination, practice, a lengthy process of absorption of principles in relation to our own considered judgment.

In particular it would be well to make notes of sections applicable to our special problems.

### *2. Note-taking*

But in what form to make the notes; that is the question. Most people make notes by just jotting down a hotch-potch. But to re-read such notes would demand superhuman effort, and they are wisely never looked at again. For notes to be of use, they must be made with system. As this needs impressing on any class we take, it will be as well at this point to enlarge on the whole subject.

Whether full notes are required (not usually) or notes on main points only, the important thing is to mould

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the material ruthlessly into shape with heads, sub-heads, and orderly lay-out. Everything to be recorded must be reduced to order. Continuous composition is out of place : parallel clipped phrases are more suitable. The good note-maker will have only half the number of words of the haphazard fellow ; but watch the two when they come to revising from their notes.

An ounce of practice is worth a ton of precept, so here is an example of note-taking, of a kind specially suitable for use in discussion ; it includes questions and comments as well as the ordinary planned summary. The material summarized is that of the present chapter. (Blank spaces in a notebook should not be regarded as waste of paper !)

<i>Main Head.</i>	<i>Sub-heads.</i>	<i>Comment or Query.</i>
1		
	Teacher needs mirrors to discover himself.	(a) The class : as learns or behaves. May be a bad class. Can any class judge its teacher ?
	(b) A friend :	Not a safe judgment: friend may have personal fads and fancies.
	i. To label our good qualities. ii. To label our bad qual. iii. To advise how to improve.	
2	(c) Himself. Whether satisfied. Making self-criticisms.	Unsafe: too much self-flattery, or else too high standards. But agreed, mutually corrective.
How Training Course Works.	(a) The class. Artificial.	Inevitable.
	(b) A tutor. Idealistic.	Of what use, then ?
	(c) Student. Method-conscious.	Crushes individuality ? Or promotes it ?

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<i>Main Head.</i>	<i>Sub-heads.</i>	<i>Comment or Query.</i>
3		
Result of Training.	<p>(a) Inevitable progress.</p> <p>(b) May discard principles later.</p> <p>(c) But has adaptability.</p>	<p>Encouraging.</p> <p>Why not be practical to start with?</p> <p>Wastage.</p>
4		
This Book as Trainer.	<p>(a) Average portrait of good teacher.</p> <p>(b) Gives advice.</p> <p>(c) Not to swallow whole:</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">i. Adapt freely to own needs.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">ii. Think over and query.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">iii. Make notes, discuss with friends. Masticate.</p>	<p>Useful: we can compare with our own ideals.</p> <p>May not be sound; but useful to discuss and test.</p> <p>Difficult: a counsel of perfection. But worth the attempt.</p>
5		
Note-taking Methods and Value.	<p>(a) Several methods.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">i. Haphazard.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">ii. Under heads and sub-heads.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">iii. On whole, or just selected points.</p> <p>(b) Illustration of (a) ii.</p> <p>(c) Value: deepening impressions, learning method.</p> <p>(d) When to take.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Not on first reading. Ideally better not during actual talk. But in practice must be.</p>	<p>Some prefer a running summary?</p> <p>Use of notes on parts that stand out anyhow?</p> <p>People take too many notes? A slick habit?</p> <p>Should notes be made during lecture or in intervals?</p>

The value of note-taking, in addition to that of usefulness for revision, lies largely in the effort it involves in

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the reduction of the flowing material to shape and order. This effort forms a training in method and system, in reading properly, and thinking. It gives mastery over the material to be learnt. As for the comments and queries, they help to deepen the student's reaction by encouraging the expression of any thoughts arising on the given points. They are also an aid to subsequent discussion.

When making notes of the contents of a book, it pays to find out the lie of the land by reading through the whole book first. Then in the close re-reading there will be no temptation to make notes on unimportant points.

When making notes of a talk or lecture, there is usually no choice but to make them while it is going on. That is unfortunate ; as experiment shows the note-taker takes in less of the lecture than the non-note-taker, for, his attention being distracted, he loses the thread. The speaker would be wise to require full attention, but pause every quarter of an hour to allow for notes to be made. Such notes could be the finished article. If the speaker does not do this, the unskilled note-taker is sometimes well advised to make skeleton notes only, with the minimum of effort, for rewriting afterwards in careful sectional form. A good plan adopted by some tutors as an aid to their students is not to require note-taking, but after the lecture to ask a series of quick revision questions, the answers to which form a substitute for direct notes. Still, there *are* people who can listen well and at the same time make good systematic notes. Why not our students ?

## CHAPTER II.—TEACHERS AND TEACHERS

### 1. *Some Queries*

Is there any teacher so bad that he cannot find a single student able to learn something from him ? Perhaps ; but he is a rare being, because in every class there are diverse tastes and tempers, to at least one of which the teacher should be congenial. Or is there any teacher so good that every student under him learns the maximum ? Perhaps ; but he too is rare, because no one is so perfectly composite as to appeal equally to every taste and temper. So we must start by admitting original sin : there is no absolute of good or evil. It is no use asking for the moon.

What we need to consider is the good average teacher, who gives considerable help and inspiration to his students, and gains from them a warm response. Is there only one type of this good teacher ? If there are more, what are they like ? What are the weaker teachers like ? What qualities and skills belong to the good teacher ? Is he born, or made, or born and made ?

### 2. *Two Main Types*

There is not one fixed type of good teacher everywhere and at once recognizable by the same qualities.

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Perhaps at bottom there are two types, with numerous variations of each. One is the "inner," the other the "outer" type. A teacher of the "inner" type is a fairly silent man, often with a "boiled egg" face. He does not exhibit much acting and swaying ability, but he understands human nature, and by skilful direction obtains the confidence and the co-operation of his class. Of one such man a friend said, "He seems to do less work than any of us, if indeed any work at all; but he gets more out of his class—which loves and respects him—than any two others of us put together. There is something about him, that's all." He has a humorous shrewdness. His fundamental good sense gets across somehow; and his very quietness proves a stimulus to discussion and work. He never over-teaches.

The teacher of the "outer" type is a man of visibly live presence, endowed with a gift of expression in word and action, who can present any topic with humour and eloquence, dominate or inspire by his vital force, and ensure a keen response in thought and work by his energetic example. He is actor, preacher, humorist, thinker, leader, artist, and what not, all in one. He is the Lloyd George to the other's Neville Chamberlain, the Shaw to the other's Galsworthy. He bubbles over while the other has an air of repose. He is the show teacher, the other the practical man.

Both types, in all their varieties, are useful and necessary. The former is more at home with executive subjects like mathematics, book-keeping, shorthand, engineering; the latter with philosophic subjects like literature, politics, and history. The one is suited to the regular discharge of steady jobs, the other to breaking new ground and pioneering new ideas. The one is a

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regulator, the other a prophet. In their off moments, when their talent is at a low ebb, they have corresponding weaknesses ; the first is a bore, the second still interests, but fussily does all the work himself, leaving nothing to the class. The first is liable to become a formalist, the second a mere titillator and hunter after effect. The first is social, the second individual.

To grasp at the outset that these two types exist is to save much heartburning. There is no need to envy our opposite type. We need first to perfect our own ; then to add some of the art of our opposite. After all, we are born more of the one type than of the other ; and if one has the fascination of self-expression, the other has the charm of self-effacement. As an "inner" teacher we can prepare on occasion a flashing lesson or lecture ; as an "outer" we can learn to utilize when required a quiet rhythm and an operative silence. The exercise of a continuous hold over the class must be ours in either case ; as showmen our constant visible activity ensures it, while as pervading presences our continuity of purpose makes itself felt through the long pauses in work, and the spaces of discussion and executive activity.

The essential thing, under all our efforts to improve, is sincerity ; we must be true to our basic selves.

### 3. *The Ideal Teacher*

So the good teacher or leader is born rather than made. He naturally finds happiness in teaching. He is not a solitary (or only so in certain moods), for he likes people, whether singly or in groups. He is intelligent, yet not

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contemptuous of the limited, the immature, and the ignorant ; and he is intelligent about people as well as about ideas. He has energy, ready or in reserve, a balanced and stable nature, and throws himself into his work without self-consciousness and hesitancy. He has a sense of order, without being cut-and-dried. He instinctively realizes that one person differs from another in a hundred ways, that tact reduces friction, and that discipline is not incompatible with a cheerful air of fairness and freedom. He sees his subject not as something in itself, but as something seen through the medium of the class ; it is not economics but as much of economics as John Smith and Edna Jones can take in and appreciate. He does not judge himself by what a good lecture or set of notes and questions he has contrived, but by how much his class has been helped. He has his eyes not on the visiting inspector or registration official but on the class. Finally, he has the power of expression, some imagination, and a sense of humour.

It is not surprising, then, that it should have been found,<sup>1</sup> from the study of innumerable teachers' answers to questionnaires, that the first requirement for success as a teacher is to have had a happy childhood in a congenial home environment. Of the secondary school-mistresses happy in their teaching, 73.7 per cent. had had this good fortune ; of those unsuccessful and dissatisfied, only 34.1 per cent. Thus, broadly speaking, the good teacher is born and then made early.

But it is useless to pretend that a man cannot be a good teacher while conspicuously departing from the analyses given above. He can. The most notable case is

<sup>1</sup> Mary Birkinshaw, *The Successful Teacher, An Occupational Analysis.* (Hogarth Press.)

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that of the severe and irascible teacher who yet manages to be respected and successful. There have been great whipping headmasters, like Dr. Richard Busby of Westminster School, just as in every organized body there have been iron disciplinarians. Yet in the light of what we are learning to-day of human development, however useful these men are in special circumstances, the fact remains that for normal occasions a humane and tolerant leadership would promote a no less efficient but more harmonious result. The world to-day suffers from too many warped people. Crushed themselves, they afterwards enjoy crushing others, a frailty neatly illustrated in Sheridan's *The Rivals* when Sir Anthony "trims" the Captain, the Captain his man, his man the boy.

Anyhow, in a world of competing points of view we must take a definite side; in this instance either the liberal or the blood and iron. For our part, the blood and iron seems all wrong.

### 4. Other Grades

The unsuccessful teacher is usually wooden, heavy, lacking in capacity to understand people. Sometimes the fault is innate—the bad teacher is born so: at other times the fault goes back to a peculiar trait of human nature. It is this: in any work that, like teaching, means the putting of conscious ideas into practice on instinctive human nature, to be "natural" is excessively difficult. Let a child shout in the street, and he is natural; ask him to come out before an audience and say he is enjoying himself, and he will quite likely stammer, blush, and look stupid. He feels he ought to say something polished

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and dignified compared with his street shouting, and he is paralysed at the prospect. This shows itself in the artificiality of much of public speaking, poetry, the decorative arts, and aristocratic manners. It is apparent in many ages in the fashions of clothes.

Thus the teacher or lecturer without much sympathetic imagination either becomes flustered by the presence of his class and closes up uncomfortably—so that what he says or does lacks sap—or else he fails to understand his students' needs and merely pours out material by the hour irrespective of whether the class takes it in or not. He bores and crushes at the same time. He shows no skill in "handling" the subject-matter or the class.

The good teacher is the reverse. He usually has a big reserve of information and anecdote, a background of interest and reality. He can teach because in teaching he is largely creative, and his artistic joy communicates itself to the class. He is a maker.

So it is not entirely to exaggerate when an inspector says (not infrequently) that by the time he has been two minutes in a classroom he has a pretty shrewd notion whether the man in charge is a first, second, or third class teacher. The first class man reveals by his bearing, movements, words, that he is alive, knowledgeable, in possession of the confidence of the class, and endowed with some distinction of character or personality. The second class man is not unlike him, but is more dependent on the usual tricks of control and organization, and is not so conspicuously intelligent. The third class man is the practitioner, less endowed with charm or fire, more limited to routine work, the same yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow; the unambitious plodder, a useful instructor

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and fact-deliverer, if not a broadening and inspiring influence.

There are also fourth and lower classes.

### *5. Models to Avoid*

There are good teachers and bad ones, but there are also potential good teachers who are not so good as they might be. The potentially good man may have had unfortunate experience; but more likely he has unconsciously imitated a bad model—say, a dominating personality of a rigid and unenlightened type.

We go into a classroom and listen to a man teaching the elements of book-keeping to thirty adolescents not much younger than himself. He shouts, frowns, leers, makes futile gestures, pours scorn on incorrect answers, marches all round the room, and finds something to roar about even when the class is silently working out examples. We have a word with him. He declares teaching very fatiguing, and apt to cause sore throats—exasperating to a singer with a sensitive tenor voice. He complains that the class does not work hard enough; and disclaims responsibility (as well he may when he knows he resembles Captain Bligh on the quarter-deck, and cannot be accused of being "soft"). We ask him why he teaches like that. He thinks for a while and at length realizes and tells us it is because he is imitating a school teacher of his childhood. He had accepted him unquestioningly as a good teacher—because he always looked so much as if he were teaching! We tell him his voice is raucous and bound to get on every one's nerves, and that his fatigue and sore throats are his own

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fault. We advise a lower pitch, a softer tone of voice, and a complete absence of fuss. A week or two later he is a different man, the strain gone. Yet without our criticism he would have gone on in the same old way, never dreaming he was stupidly copying a bad model.

And there are many types of bad model to avoid. First, as above, comes the Sergeant-Major, all bellow and bullying, creating an air of constraint. He gets mechanical jobs promptly done with drilled efficiency, but his control is noisy, and the energy lost in hating him might have served to learn the book-keeping in half the time. Besides, most adult classes are voluntary, and fade away before reminders of the worst days at school. Avoid the Sergeant-Major.

Then there is the No Nonsense type. Less loud and inflexible he is still devastating. It is a question of outlook. He calls everything "Cissie stuff" that is not hard fact or mental gymnastic. He approves of economics, business practice, science, whatever has a stiff appearance and is untouched by sentiment. He despises musical and literary appreciation, beauty, philosophy, mystical religion. In English he prefers grammar, in mathematics arithmetic, in retail distribution legal enactments and lists of abstract qualities, in religious instruction the Ten Commandments. He may get his material over quite well, but his angular mind makes him a narrowing and depressing influence on students of finer sensibilities or wider outlook. He grates. He lacks sympathy and imagination. Yet as a "he-man" he may easily become the model for a small-minded worshipper. No Nonsense may be a decent enough chap in his limited way, but he is not the fine upstanding fellow he thinks. He is

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one-sided, incomplete. He is not chock-full of sense either.

His blood brother is the Superior Fellow. His capacity is often respectable ; that is not in question. But he regards his students as beneath him, mentally or socially, or both. He feels he is conferring a favour on them to teach them at all. Among his friends he calls them " Lazy louts, quite impossible ; but of course one has to make allowance for the kind of home they come from, don't you know," " hopeless outsiders, my dear chap," " yokels," " bumpkins." He fondly imagines they do not divine his contempt ; or else he says, " They hate me, of course ; but I glory in it." Here and there a student of his own kidney will like him (he is apt, anyhow, to have favourites), but the mass quickly scent his antipathy and resent it. They retort by referring to him as " snob," " haw-haw," " uppish devil " ; and if they are working folk at a voluntary class they soon leave off attending. The strength of their feeling can be gauged from the warmth with which they speak of some other man, " He speaks as man to man," " He treats us always as equals," " He doesn't look down on us as dirt," " He doesn't talk rich to us and play the la-di-da."

Pray avoid imitating the Superior Fellow ; he sets up a wasteful inferiority feeling in his classes.

Less likely to attract imitators is the Tame Mouse. He wears a down-in-the-mouth look, and earns some such nickname as Soapy or Foggy Willie, or, if he is sarcastic, the Acid Drop. (After Bottom and Sir Toby we get Flute and Sir Andrew.) He is more to be pitied than laughed at. He takes no advantage of such prestige-givers as dress, distance, deliberation, to lift himself above contempt and neglect. He is frequently a good fellow

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who simply lacks the art of making the best of himself. His looks he cannot help, and his weakness or nervousness ought to earn him sympathy—which it does among the tender-hearted. But the teacher has to deal with the hard and the thoughtless, who soon mob-lead the rest into ragging. So the Tame Mouse often has a bad time ; and at best his feeble driving power limits his ability to help. Yet an unselfish and cultivated Tame Mouse may be an excellent influence on the less robust spirits. They in turn may imitate him, unwittingly. But he is a negative model, impotent to aid them in developing their true style. Avoid even the Tame Mouse.

Pray avoid also the Mannered Teacher, the Sentimental Teacher, the My-Subject-is-the-only-One-Worth-While Teacher, the Take-it-or-Leave-it Teacher, and the Teaching-is-my-Rest-Time Teacher, with any number of others who have at one time or other proved the bane of our lives.

### *6. Models to Imitate*

As to models to imitate, it is all a personal matter. But here are two, the Man of Method and the Man of Charm.

The Man of Method arranges his whole course so that it pans out exactly. He leads into his exposition by easy stages. He provides abundant practical exercises or opportunities for discussion. He plans his lessons so that they have movement and unity, purpose and point. He times himself well. His notes and illustrations are models of order and suitability. He is meticulous in every respect. He may not rise to any cordiality or inspiring brilliance, but he wins confidence by his adequacy. He

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has his own kind of *mastery* ; and though he may tend to overvalue method and make it an end in itself, he has a solid worth that small faults cannot whittle away.

We can all learn from the Man of Method.

His rival is the Man of Charm. He is attractive in himself, and whatever he deals with is sure to prove interesting. He has a striking presence, if not when in repose, yet the moment he starts to speak. He has fire, gusto, dramatic instinct, and can get his stuff across with the minimum of preparation and notes, which indeed are apt to cramp his style. He is ardently interested in his subject, yet to his auditors seems chiefly interested in them and how to convey to them the fulness of his knowledge. He has imagination, humour, a turn for the striking phrase. He has so many irons in the fire that he has no time for careful preparation ; but his live-wire personality imbues his students with keenness, so they work hard and make up for his planning deficiencies. A saying of one of his students is, " Please go on, Mr. Perss, I could listen to you all day though you were only repeating nonsense syllables ! " He is popular and beloved. His enemies say, " A superficial fellow, who avoids all the hard work, and makes a public show of himself ; anybody could be brilliant if he cared to stoop to that. " Of course " anybody " could not ; it is a gift. He is not a mountebank, but an artist. He is a living lesson in how not to be dull, and how cheerful resilience reduces fatigue for oneself and the class.

Such are our two models. To the learner-teacher who finds one or other easy to model himself upon we say, " Happy man be his dole ! "

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### 7. *Teaching Adults unlike Teaching Children*

Whether Man of Method or Man of Charm, one may teach children or one may teach adults. Yet the teaching is not the same.

Adults can be divided into those who want to learn and those who will learn only if cajoled into doing so. The former will learn with any but the hopeless teacher ; the latter require the bait of advancement in their job, and a teacher who has a way with him. But a class of children has the general inducement of law and force in the whole school ; and development has not reached the point of final recognition of tastes and distastes. So children can be driven easier than adults, and their resistance can seldom become vocal. Adults can effectively strike, or leave the class. They can size a man up not merely as a disciplinarian, but as a man of mental and moral substance. They can see through hackneyed mannerisms that may succeed with children, like bending forward from the hips, folding the arms, or wagging a monitory finger. They resent more deeply than children the teacher who would order them about, talk down to them, or make them look small by petty sarcasm. In fact adults are a ticklish lot, whether they have already forgotten most of what they learnt at school, or are in some ways the teacher's equal in knowledge and standing. One can govern them only as Burke said one governs nations : not by force, but by a knowledge of their temper.

But the reward of teaching adults is often greater than that of teaching children. For children a large number of people are responsible, and it is hard to say how far

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we in particular have contributed to their development. For adults, learning is more specialized, and we can gauge how far we have helped them towards getting through trade and professional tests, or towards forming life interests and acquiring a wise set of mind. The knowledge of the extent of this influence is the greatest of rewards. We feel not practitioners only, but craftsmen.

For most of us our real teaching gift, if we have any, is either for children or for adults ; not for both. Yet there is enough in common between the two skills for the good teacher to do useful work at either.

### *8. Evening Class and Adult Teaching Contrasted*

But there are subdivisions to the teaching of adults. Evening class work is definitely an extension of secondary school teaching ; exposition and the working of plenty of exercises. W.E.A. and other non-vocational adult work is an extension of the best kind of conversation ; the knowledgeable first speaker simply and fully presents his topic, provoking a response which reveals itself in discussion, questions, fresh expansions from all quarters. The evening class teacher must exert some degree of domination ; the W.E.A. tutor must be host, talker, and chairman. The former stands above his class, the latter is one of it. One is like a playwright, the other an essayist.

The Man of Method would excel in the first ; in the second the Man of Charm.

## CHAPTER III.—LESSON PLANNING

### 1. *Lesson-Pattern*

THE simplest course to adopt, no doubt, in planning any particular piece of teaching would be to take some handy text-book and dole out the contents of the requisite chapters. With practice we should know just how much can be got over in the allotted time. Then in the class-room we might on the spur of the moment invent a few questions or set an exercise or propose the chief sectional subjects as topics for discussion.

But to this convenient system there are drawbacks. Of these the chief is that text-books usually present their subjects logically. A book about cotton may begin with an account of cotton as a plant, continue with a history of the cotton industry, and end with a review of the various stages in the process of manufacture. But this may not suit us as teachers. The order we want is the psychological, viz., the order that slides the material most naturally into the consciousness of the class. Thus with one class we may prefer to begin with the modern processes, and end with the history, with another the reverse—depending on the quickness of the class, its previous knowledge, the aim of the course. The same applies to the treatment within each chapter. The book may chronicle the facts about the plant as though all were

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of equal interest and importance. We may prefer to start on some attractive aspect of the plant, and then link up the remaining knowledge with that. A biography of Abraham Lincoln will give a complete collection of relevant facts, but Drinkwater's *Abraham Lincoln*, because it is a play, gives only a handful in a significant pattern.

In fact, a lesson or indeed a lecture might well be defined as "a handful of facts in a significant pattern." (Many lessons are more like a trade directory—bursting with all-inclusiveness.)

The problem revolves round that "significant pattern." Consider the analogous case of a doctor on a visit to a patient. First the doctor says, "Good-morning, Mr. Smith. A nice, bright day to-day. Looks like spring coming." He has made contact. Then he goes on, "Let me see, didn't you say you had some discomfort when I was round a fortnight ago to see little Reginald? Come, tell me all about it." He gathers the facts already known, and pertinent to the case in question.<sup>1</sup> Now he says, "Well, Mr. Smith, I'm going to make a thorough examination." He makes the examination, collecting all the facts and noting all the symptoms. Quietly, behind his bushy eyebrows, he is thinking hard, comparing the symptoms with those of other cases he has known, and linking them into a scheme. At last, a gleam; he generalizes, sees definitely what all

<sup>1</sup> This process is deductive: the doctor forms a theory after noting certain symptoms, then tests its validity by looking for corroborative evidence. Finding this, he assumes his diagnosis is right, and proceeds. In the later part of this chapter the lesson method is slightly different, as the facts to be examined and compared are not diverse but similar, and the law of their common qualities is looked for. The reasoning process is then inductive.

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the symptoms mean. At once he names the disease to himself, and deduces what treatment to prescribe. He tells the patient as much as he judges wise, prescribes the regimen to follow, and promises to have a bottle of medicine ready in half an hour.

Here is the pattern summarized :

Getting contact and relevant facts from auditor.

Assembling the new and detailed facts—temperature, pulse, local symptoms.

Associating the items together, and forming links.

Generalizing, checking, and defining the central trouble.

Applying the knowledge in prescribing treatment.

And it is a good general pattern for lessons and lectures.

### *2. Preparation and Statement of Aim*

Let us go on to amplify the scheme. *Preparation* : this is our preamble or introduction. It breaks off the students' thoughts from anything or everything, and directs them to the matter in hand. It calls up the relevant knowledge they already have. It fixes their first image, and sets up the topic of the lesson to concentrate upon.

It may be factual or it may be dramatic.

A factual opening gets us down directly to work. It generally consists of a question about or reminder of the subject dealt with in the previous lesson of the series. So it is a linking up. It may take the form of a request to read over the notes taken the week before, or to give a summary of them in a few sentences. It may also be a definition, or statement of some known principle, with

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an intimation that now we are going to explore the subject more carefully or in some particular aspect.

A dramatic opening secures an essentially interesting starting-point only indirectly related to the intended topic. The funny story is a typical gambit (in speeches especially, which are, after all, a kind of lesson). There is the topical allusion—to something in the public eye, or some local industry, or something which has appeared recently in radio or films. There is the display of map or picture, the reading of poem or prose excerpt, the examination of specimens. The element common to all is the appetising, insinuating suggestion of the topic, in place of logically forking it into view. If the topic is to be King Henry VIII., a factual preparation might take the form of an oral summary of affairs at the close of Henry VII.'s reign. The obvious dramatic opening would be a reference to Mr. Charles Laughton, and a short discussion or criticism of the famous film.

To both forms of preparation there is a definite outcome; that is in the Statement of Aim. The class cannot concentrate its attention and thought effectively until it knows what the speaker proposes to deal with. An opening on Mr. Laughton, unless it was directly pointed to its special purpose, would suit a talk on film acting, the untrustworthiness of historical films, or the art of Mr. Laughton, just as well as on the history of King Henry's reign.

The Statement of Aim may take a variety of forms. We might simply say, "To-day we are going to study the reign of King Henry VIII." Or more exactly, "To-day we are going to inquire into the policy of Henry VIII. in relation (a) to foreign affairs, and (b) Church supremacy." Or more trenchantly, "The film

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is a travesty ; we are going to examine Henry VIII. in history." Or we might put it suggestively, "To-day we are going to look into the real facts about Henry VIII., and then judge for ourselves whether the film representation is a true one."

Or suppose the lesson is on Salesmanship. We might put the aim as a problem to solve : "Our aim to-night is to learn something about Salesmanship. Some say, 'You are a born salesman or you are not,' as if there was nothing to learn. We are going to find out if the statement is justified."

These clear intimations of the lesson-topic win the co-operation of the class, which then sees immediate purpose in its work. If not too blatant, a statement of aim rouses anticipation. It effectively gets the lesson under way.

### 3. *Presentation*

The main part of the lesson is our next concern : the *Presentation*, so called because it presents the new matter.

The first rule in planning the *Presentation* is to imagine that the class knows nothing about the intended subject. In the classroom this stringency can be relaxed when the response is good ; but if we do not plan on this assumption we are liable to miss out many little points essential for the class to know.

The second rule is to furnish only as much material as can be completely covered in the given time after allowance has been made for questioning, illustration, and exercises. No fault is commoner than to prepare too much matter for the capacity of the class and the time

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available. The reason is a fear of finishing too soon—which seldom occurs, and anyhow does no harm.

The third rule is to start with the known and proceed from that to the unknown. If the topic is Tea, we should begin with familiar facts—the tea-drinking habit, kinds of tea, places of origin, China, India, Ceylon. On this basis we could then advance to supplying exact information, fresh distinctions, and entirely new matter. Or if the topic is the expenditure of public money, we should begin with examples of the expenditure of private money (for example, our own), and from an examination of this obtain ideas of a simple kind to apply to public spending.

The fourth rule is to divide the new matter into steps, making the complex simpler. Each step can be taken by itself, without entanglements. If the matter is the literary output of Shakespeare, a wide topic, it can be handled in three sections—Early Period, Middle, Late ; or, if by type of play, Comedy, History, Tragedy. The same thing applies to teaching or imparting a skill. Thus the old-fashioned waltz appeared as an unseizable continuous motion, which we might long have attempted in vain. But teachers split up the movements into six definite steps, which they taught one at a time. After a while, when we had mastered them sufficiently, the six in rapid succession turned into the complete movement. Or take a foreign accent : the pronouncing of the French “u.” The teacher tells the beginner first to shape his lips for saying the English “oo.” When he does that promptly and well, the teacher asks him to retain the mouth position, but to try uttering the sound “ee.” In time he utters a sound fairly close to the desired French “u.”

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For most lessons *three* steps are the most suitable in sectionalising. Three is just sufficiently large a number not to produce a "bitty" impression ; and it covers a host of helpful relationships ; for example :

Past, Present, Future.	Youth, Middle Life, Later Years.
Physical, Mental, Moral.	Practical, Theoretical, Applied.
Animal, Vegetable, Mineral.	Domestic, Industrial, Public.
Start, Development, Result.	Advantages, Disadvantages, Com-
Subject, Attitude, Style.	parison.
Home, Empire, Foreign.	

Each of these may be subdivided again ; but the number of subdivisions cannot be fixed, depending as it does on the subject in hand.

After the completion of a section, revision should be undertaken in some form, open or disguised, *e.g.* by questioning, oral summaries, repetition of key statements, the re-reading of notes or pages of text, or other means. These sectional revisions—just a short turning over of the material while it is fresh—should be resumed in a final general revision, which again should be short.

### 4. Comparison and Generalization

If the presentation consists of information to be imbibed as it stands, the next step is simply to set exercises on it, of reproduction and the like. But for the lesson that needs a "spire of meaning" (a term invented by Galsworthy to denote the "lesson" or theme of a social play) the collected facts have to be examined and thought over for the purpose of making a generalization. This can take many forms ; thus in history it may be a moral

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judgment or estimate of military or other achievement ; in literature a brief assessment of qualities and grade of importance—e.g. "Austin Dobson only echoed the eighteenth century, and was essentially a minor poet" ; in grammar, book-keeping, and other analytic subjects the enunciation of a general rule.

The importance of a "spire of meaning" is particularly marked in lectures of the discussion type. Suppose the tutor to be talking about John Ruskin. A merely biographical lecture would lead nowhere. But in the first section of the Presentation the leader might deal with Ruskin's ideas on art ; in the second, on nature ; in the third, on social justice. The class could then summarise and compare Ruskin's ideas on these three subjects, and attempt a generalization on them all ; as "Ruskin was an idealist consumed with a passion for righteousness and nobility, so that the spirit of his theorizing is of the highest value but the scientific truth of it is questionable." Or a less academic conclusion might be, "Ruskin was wrong-headed in all his ideas," or "Ruskin's ideas are substantially true." Discussion would then be invited on both the general conclusion and the particular ideas of Ruskin. That being exhausted, deductive applications might be discussed, as, for example, "judging from the ideas Ruskin expressed on various schools of art, what would have been his opinion, had he lived to-day, on 'modernist' art ?"

Similarly for analytic subjects. Take grammar—a lesson on the Noun. On the blackboard would be written a dozen sentences on various subjects and of various kinds, with the nouns in each underlined. These would be examined, for the class to find out and state their respective functions. That step over, the class

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would compare results, and then formulate their conclusion : That the function of one kind of word is to name things. We should supply the technical term Noun, and the class would formulate a definition of it.

The rule in this kind of teaching is : proceed from the particular to the general.

### 5. Application

The final step is the *Application*. The process of generalizing *from* particulars was inductive : this step, where the general rule is applied *to* particulars, is deductive.<sup>1</sup>

The application usually takes the form of working out exercises or writing essays embodying the principles established in the lesson.

If the subject is æsthetic, *e.g.* " Suggestion in the Poetry of Keats," a tutor may hesitate to degrade the beauty of the poet's work by setting petty deductive exercises. But other, less blatant tests can be devised. However, if a talk has been about the divisions of a pig's carcass, no such grating on sensibilities will arise. The class can be cheerfully asked to work out the value of a given carcass from the listed prices per pound of the several cuts. By sketches, diagrams, learning by heart, making notes, actually handling specimens, the class comes to grips with the new material, and forms a

<sup>1</sup> The process is inductive when a child, having seen many four-legged, furry creatures of a certain appearance, realizes they are cats. It is deductive when, the next time she sees a stray animal, she decides that, because it has the above qualities, it is a cat. Induction leads to new knowledge, which in turn is made real and serviceable by this type of deductive application.

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complex of related ideas and impressions about it. Whereas if we talk all the time, and omit any Application, we waste a good half of the lesson.

### 6. *The Complete Scheme*

That completes the ideal scheme of a lecture or lesson of the normal type :

Preparation, leading to Statement of Aim.

Presentation, in three sections, with recapitulations.

(Or, Preparation, Comparison and Generalization.)

Application to new particulars.

But the above is not to be regarded as a rigid model : it is a servant, not a master. It is suggestive, not regulative. Its use is subject to a hundred modifications easily discovered in actual experience. Thus a " lesson " or " lecture " need not be restricted to one meeting ; it may cover three or more two-hour periods : Ruskin's art ideas would easily occupy a whole evening, his other ideas likewise, and the generalization would come only after all the separate lectures or discussions had been completed. Meantime there would be discussion on the sectional generalizations.

Again, in practising a skill, there would be only two steps, viz. Preparation and Practice.

The essential thing is that there should be *some* plan.

### 7. *Organizing Discussion*

Stress has been laid on discussion as a suitable form of application for lectures involving ideas and issues ; but it cannot always be directly planned for as in the Ruskin

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lecture mentioned above. It may be rather an indefinite follow-up than a logical application. With beginners discussion requires stimulating by challenge and the pointing of opposed views. It also depends for success on the tutor's or leader's attitude. If he is open-minded and quite undisturbed at hearing the expression of extreme views of whatever sort, he will create an atmosphere conducive to free discussion. All the more so if he has keenness, capacity as a listener, and a sense of humour.

The questions for discussion should arise from the matters treated in the lecture ; but they may take shape from either the tutor or the class, as occasion serves. The following is a typical procedure of a large class—say, fifty strong.

Before the lesson, or talk, the leader suggests that notes be taken of the half-dozen points that prove arresting ; and that in a column on the right of the paper these points be rewritten in the form of questions. After the talk, the leader asks the first member of the group to read out the best of his questions. That becomes Question One. After several questions have been obtained in this way, members may prefer to second one or other question already given. When the fiftieth student has been reached, perhaps a dozen questions are in hand. Then either from the secondings, or by vote, the three most popular are fixed and adopted for discussion. If this method is too cumbersome, a small committee can be appointed to choose the questions, or the leader may choose them himself. (In some B.B.C. Talks Pamphlets, the printed questions are not suitable : they are too general, or too directly answerable.)

For good discussion a group is best that numbers about

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nine to fifteen. There is then neither private conversation nor platform speaking. We therefore divide the fifty up into four groups, each with its own section leader and recorder, and its own allotted room. Each leader enunciates the questions in definite form, encourages the rest to speak, and supplies information when required. He has to draw out the silent member with a quiet query, to curb the garrulous and opinionated, to fill up lengthy gaps (but a short gap is an encouragement to shy speakers), and to open up fresh lines of inquiry : he is host, chairman, tutor, and encyclopædia all in one. When the three questions have been more or less hammered out, the small groups filter back into the main room ; and when all fifty members are in their places we, as group leader, request the recorders to make their reports. Everybody concerned thus learns what arguments have been used and what decisions reached in every one of the groups. We add or criticise at discretion, and round the meeting off.

Such discussion suitably follows wireless talks, lectures, exhibitions of specimens, expositions of rival processes, counsels on matters of taste or morals, proposals for forming a class. Its value lies in the promoting of fluency and confidence, and the deepening of knowledge through the expansion and interrelation of ideas.

## CHAPTER IV.—PLANNING A COURSE

### 1. *Recasting the Syllabus*

IN planning a session's course in subjects like shorthand, typewriting, book-keeping, foreign languages, where skill in more and more difficult operations is involved, we must scheme things out accordingly. It is all a question of suitably graded steps : each skill is needed in its due place, none may be omitted. But in subjects like history, geography, literature, commodities, where a large field of information is to be covered, the problem is more open, and advice can be offered.

The main task is to ensure that the information is not treated in the flat. There is no skill in doling out equal quantities of knowledge with equal lack of emphasis. That leads inevitably to vapidty and vagueness. High lights are needed, and effective patterning.

Here, for example, is a year's syllabus in Retail Distribution :

General Organization and Control of a large business.

Administration in the Shop itself.

Salesmanship.

Display and Sales Development.

Commodities :

Tea, coffee, cocoa, sugar, cereals, pulses, meals, flour, and other starch foods ; foods and their preservation, preserved fruits ;

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spices and sundries ; canned meat, fish, bacon and hams, lard, eggs, cooked meats, milk, butter, margarine, cheese.  
Legal Requirements, general and departmental.

All this has to be got over for examination purposes during the course of twenty-four two-hour meetings. So let us plan it on that basis, arranging it for adults, who may have done no real study since leaving school, and not much then.

First we must go over the syllabus, marking the important and less important sections. Then we can arrange broad divisions, say, three in number, with appropriate subdivisions. This process provides our simple outline :

1. General organization and salesmanship.
2. Commodities :
  - (a) Beverages and cereals.
  - (b) Preservatives and preserved foods.
  - (c) Meat and milk foods.
3. Legal information.

This is our whole pattern ; which we need not disturb, as the first and last sections are less interesting than the middle one, and so are suited to the beginning of the session when interest is fresh, and the end of the session when the examination provides an immediate impetus. If we allow four meetings for revision and testing, we shall have a total of twenty to allocate to the syllabus, as shown on the pages immediately following.

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### A SESSION'S LESSON UNITS

<i>Divisi</i>	<i>Meeting.</i>	<i>Subject.</i>	<i>Negligible sections.</i>	<i>Difficulty (A the greatest).</i>	<i>Importance (A the highest).</i>
I	1+2+3a	General organization and control of a business.		C	B
	3b	Administration in the shop.		B	B
	4+5	Salesmanship.		B	B
	6+7	Display and sales development.	Display.	B	D
	8	Revision and test.			
IIa	9	Tea.		C	B
	10	Coffee, cocoa (with sugar).	All.	C	D
	11	Flour, meals, other starch foods.	All except flour.	C	C & D
	12	Revision and half-year's test.			
IIb	13	Preservation of fruits.	Cut short.	C	B
	14	Spices and sundries.	Any.	C	D
	15	Milk ; cooked meats.	Tinned milk.	B	B
	16	Canned meat and fish.	Cut short.	C	D
		Short revision test.			
IIc	17	Bacon and hams.		C	B
	18	Lard, eggs.		D	B
	19	Butter.		B	B
	20	Margarine and cheese.		B	B
		Short revision test.			
III	21	Legal requirements : general.		A	A
	22	Legal requirements : departmental.		A	A
	23+24	Revision and tests.			

With this bird's-eye view of the session's work before us, we know just where we are, and what stresses to lay. We cease to be the prey of a congested mass of material. We can employ effective tactics.

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### 2. *Allocating Lesson Time*

The next thing is to standardize the individual meetings (not bindingly, only for the sake of a system to start from), so that the units of work and time suit the general necessities of the course. There is wide scope for personal planning and constant experiment. Here are some examples: in each, activities are varied to reduce fatigue.

- (a) 7. 0-7.10 Revision of previous week's notes. Register.  
7.10-8.10 Lesson or lecture: new material.  
8.10-8.40 Working examples; maps, diagrams, note-taking, and the like. With a five minutes' interval.  
8.40-8.50 Oral revision, or brief discussion, raising of points, demonstration, correction.  
8.50-9. 0 Setting of work for the next meeting, with hints on treatment.
- (b) Start with a lengthy practical question immediately after filling in the register. Then work out the answer or plan of it on the board.
- (c) 7. 0-7.10 Interest story bringing in origin of TEA.  
7.10-7.30 (A) Countries of origin. Supplies. Notes.  
7.30-8. 0 (B) Cultivation; treatment; blends. Notes.  
8. 0-8.30 (A1) Sketch maps; tables of exports.  
8.30-9. 0 (B1) Sketches of plants, processes. List of questions.
- (d) W.E.A. Class Meeting.  
7. 0-7.10 Class secretary reads aloud the log of the previous week, as written up by a student; comment by tutor. Register.  
7.10-7.55 Tutor gives a talk from which alternative generalizations might arise.  
7.55-8. 0 Interval for class to talk the subject over in small groups.

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- 8. 0-8.10 Tutor reviews main points and settles chief questions for discussion (with class help).
  - 8.10-8.30 Class discussion on the first topic agreed on.
  - 8.30-8.40 Class discussion on the second topic agreed on.
  - 8.40-8.50 Class discussion on the third topic agreed on.
  - 8.50-9. 0 Piece of original work by student read aloud and commented on by class. Tutor sets reading and topics to write on.
- (e) Wireless Discussion Group.
- 7.20-7.27 Leader opens up the topic (helped by B.B.C. pamphlet). Members make their ideas known. Seating made comfortable.
  - 7.27-7.30 Operator member tunes in. Class settles down to listen.
  - 7.30-8. 0 Talk comes over : group listens.
  - 8. 0-8. 5 Interval. Chat. Set put away.
  - 8. 5-8.15 Leader briefly resumes main points, clearing up difficulties. Three questions decided on.
  - 8.15-9.10 Discussion of the questions.
  - 9.10-9.20 Leader's summary of findings. Group criticizes speaker and talk, for confidential report to the B.B.C.

If we adopt some such plan to begin with, we can always modify it in the light of practical experience. Each week it will be useful after the meeting to note down the distribution of time and activities actually made, and to consider possible improvements. When an evening has worked out uncommonly well, its analysis will afford a guide for the future.

### *3. Nothing Too Much*

The usual fault is to try and cram in too much, by thinking of the material instead of the class. But, as with bad planning, a process of trial and error soon

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corrects the fault. The test of the lesson is not how much we have taught, but how much the class has been induced to learn. Any preconceived plan must be scrapped the moment it fails to fit the actual class—which may prove unexpectedly ignorant of matters we had assumed as basic in our lesson. It is unwise to be over-conscientious about the single lesson ; the important thing is rather a steady drive over the whole course. Power can then be kept in reserve, and freshness retained to the end.

The real test of the success of our teaching lies in the willing and continuous work of the class.

## CHAPTER V.—PERSONAL EQUIPMENT : APPEARANCE

### *1. Utilizing Height*

GOOD actors, it has been said, make good teachers, though not all good teachers make good actors. There is certainly a great deal in expression and personality—two things which actors and teachers have in common. Even the “boiled egg” or poker-faced teacher is no exception—Stainless Stephen was hard-boiled in the classroom. An actor’s liveness and power to arrest attention : these the teacher needs in his degree, and like the actor he can perfect them by means of an acquired technique.

The tragic actors of Greece and Rome wore buskins—boots like eighteen-inch high pedestals—to exaggerate their height and dignity. They realized that the onlooker is affected that way : they were prestige-wise. It has even been said that, in tragedy, without height no actor can hope to be great. So if a teacher wants the prestige of a good presence, he must not sag and stoop down to the class, but utilize what height he has, to draw the class up to him.

But height itself is a cause of offence if we stand too close to the front desk, as front-row students must look up at a tiring angle. If we stand farther back, all can

## PERSONAL EQUIPMENT : APPEARANCE

easily keep eyes on us, and we can easily include all within our gaze.

But there is an exception to this rule. When we wish to talk in an intimate atmosphere, as in leading a discussion group, it is best to unite with the class by sitting in a circle with it, or talking from a chair or desk-top at the front. With very small classes this plan may well be the rule. But for some of us it is impossible to teach our best while cosily sitting down. Students are apt to forget who is really the leader.

### *2. Dress*

William Morris, the Socialist poet and pioneer of colour design, was once making a political speech in Birmingham. At the close an old lady went up to congratulate him, at which he was pleased : he was not often congratulated. She explained eagerly how much she had enjoyed—looking at his beautiful red tie ! His speech had hardly mattered to her at all. His magnetism for her had depended entirely on one item in his apparel.

In teaching, too, something of the teacher's influence depends on what he wears.

But the moral is not : Wear a red tie. It is rather : Don't wear a red tie, or anything else so flamboyant that the class attends to it instead of to the lecture. If we are neatly made, quiet spruce clothes will be right : if burly, easy homely clothes will be much better than an attempt to look smart. Clothes and the man should be conformable, but with some necessary element of tidiness. Even if we are temperamentally loud and unbuttoned it is scarcely playing the hypocrite to disguise

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the fact while on duty in the classroom. There are those who teach in cricket shirts, others who ape Beau Brummell, but one would hesitate to offer either as a model. "It is no mean happiness to be seated in the mean."

Any class would no doubt be astonished if we appeared in a suit of armour.

### *3. Deportment*

With what bated breath two undergraduates once awaited, at their first classics lecture, the appearance of the professor—a man not yet seen. One of them expected a lounging, untidy figure, dull-eyed and far-away; the other a clerical, owl-like stick, beady-eyed, toothily crisp in speech, tall and peppery. Both expected him to be late. Exactly "on the dot" walked in, with business-like air, a cleanly built, spruce and dapper man, who briskly mounted the rostrum, methodically placed his texts on the desk, looked the class over smartly and fearlessly, then began his lecture. He announced that his subject was "Catullus." One undergraduate whispered, "No fooling here. What a man!" The other returned, "Chairman of the Bank of England!" At one blow his prestige was established. Everything about him was clear-cut, and he had no irritating mannerisms or side.

Deportment is most important during the first three minutes of lesson or lecture, while the class is open to adapt itself to our mood. After that we are taken for granted. If we shuffle nervously in, fiddle about with our books, drop one down, stoop to pick it up and lose

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our fountain pen, then stumble over the blackboard-stand in trying to retrieve it, we can be sure the class will be regarding us with some contempt—a bad beginning of things. If we go on to sniff, emit queer noises from the throat, and speak with pompous over-exactitude, we may be greeted with guffaws, and end with pandemonium. We asked for it.

With a discussion group, restrained affability and openness quickly melt the ice.

In supervision, we can walk round giving individual attention, or else stand at the back—the ideal position for silent control. Lazy folk and leg-pullers can watch us if we stand in front, but standing at the back we can do the watching.

### 4. *The Eyes*

There was once a physics professor who gave lantern lectures in the Physics Theatre. About eighty students occupied tiers of seats almost up to the ceiling. One day the lights were extinguished as usual, a slide was thrown on the screen, and the lecture started. After about twenty minutes the professor, affected uneasily by the uncanny silence, switched on the main lights again ; and lo ! he had not a solitary auditor. The class had stolen out shortly after the start. But why ? Because the physics professor was always so absorbed in his subject that he habitually ignored the individuals in his classes. His eyes were blank. When there was disorder—not infrequent—if he deigned to notice it, he merely called some innocent student to stand out, then forgot about him. His lectures were notoriously un-

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helpful, himself (though actually an excellent man) regarded as of little account.

The chemistry professor was a man of a different stamp. He was a little man, but he had physical alertness and a brisk dignity. His eyes were like gimlets, and missed nothing. He faced his hundred students like a conqueror. If one of them let a marble drop for the fun of hearing it rattle down the wooden steps, the professor instantly fixed on the guilty man, and called his name. The culprit had to quit the room at once. If another thought to grimace while the professor was writing formulæ on the board, he repented on the spot as his name rang peremptorily out. If a bold-eyed "card" thought to outstare the professor, he soon gave in, as his own eyes watered at the unwinking glare. In short, the "stinks" professor was as famous for the efficiency of his discipline and his teaching as the physics man was notorious for being weak.

Eyes give us away. They are effective weapons if we are strong. Before we start speaking we should look round and deliberately catch every eye in turn—giving the class confidence and ourselves control. As it were, we tune in. The survey needs repeating regularly throughout the lesson, to maintain the tuning. Meanwhile we should fix our eyes not on the back wall, or the ceiling, but on some spot about the middle of the back row. If some lively spark tries to stare us out, we should gaze back steadily at him—not looking into his eyes, but at a point about an inch above the root of his nose : that should outmanœuvre him.

While dictating notes or reading aloud, we should still keep constantly looking up and catching the eyes of the class. This unites them with us. It aids us in

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getting the matter across. It checks the tendency to drag. Even at the blackboard we can still, quite at ease, turn round from time to time and give the continual impression of being present and unfussily watchful.

Unpurposeful eyes are a frequent weakness of the beginner at teaching.

### 5. Confidence

Good control presupposes ease of mind. We must be apparently indifferent as to how we shall give our lesson, yet thoroughly keen and purposeful. We should enter the classroom with thoughts occupied with things like tennis, a new novel, some political issue, or anything but the lesson ; yet instantly get into action on the job in hand. Then to be steady should be easy. We would have too strong a sense of proportion, through not being over-anxious, to get rattled if the class proved awkward. And if we *should* be tempted to become self-conscious, we could sensibly pretend to ourselves that the heads before us were just so many cabbages.

Cold dignity chills a class ; artless familiarity leads the cheeky spirits to " try it on." There is a middle state that encourages approach so far, but no farther. At first, something of the " boiled egg " technique is useful, till after a few meetings we become sure of our ground. To wear a " boiled egg " expression may require an effort, but it is worth while : the class will appreciate us all the more when we do unbend.

Timidity is a real weakness in a teacher. It makes the class feel uncomfortable. It leads to fidgets and stupid mistakes of statement. It provides a standing invitation to ragging, or at any rate to slacking and

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disrespect. Most of us are nervous in our early teaching days, but this stage should soon be passed. We have the work to think of, and the pressing needs of the individuals before us. Our job is to help people, not run away from them. It would be a fine thing if a surgeon were to faint every time he saw a patient on the operating table. . . .

Overbearingness is not much better. It is naturally resented. Timid students get an inferior feeling, bold ones an itch to pay the tutor out. The atmosphere becomes personal instead of objectively favourable to work.

To teach well, we should enjoy the job like a game ; and enter into it to win. "Superficially unconcerned, basically keen."

### 6. *Personal Rhythm*

The specific factors making up the total impression we give to the class may be very uncertain, but there is no mistaking the overriding power of the personal rhythm. That depends on the energy we generate, and our timing.

Students sense this rhythm perhaps from specific factors—walk, way of standing, gestures, appearance, voice. But they somehow *feel* what the personal rhythm is. They know whether we stand for the things they will follow, or only for the things they can ignore.

An air of vitality at once arouses interest. If the vitality is too robust, it arouses excitement—which unsettles a class for quiet work. Therefore vitality must be expressed with a certain reserve, particularly of speed. And if it is to be valuable it must be allied with breadth of view. It should permeate the subject and the enjoyment of it, not turn into an appetite for domination.

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In fact vitality is best mixed with self-effacement, when it may lead to a joyous presentation of facts fairly and open-mindedly. This presupposes the realization that it takes all sorts to make a world, and that it is good to hear different opinions. (It does not presuppose that we have no opinions ourselves, a condition which would beget vagueness.) A class quickly senses impatience of opposition, and where this exists will be reluctant to join in discussion. Many well-meaning teachers invite questions and are prepared to welcome discussion, yet because their own minds are closed, their efforts fail. They complain, "Dear me, my fellows won't discuss a thing. They simply have no ideas of their own." Yet, did they but know it, other teachers find the same class eager and able in discussion. Once stung, a class will not readily risk again the expression of a frank opinion.

The right teaching rhythm is often to be detected by the presence of a sense of humour, which suggests a sense of proportion. If the teacher's education (thinks the class) has so enriched his power of enjoyment, then it will enrich ours. On the contrary, a bored or sour countenance inevitably suggests the deadliness of study as well as of teaching. It is a positive incentive to idleness.

Imagine two tutors, both keen enough, but one grim, one twinkling-eyed. The class, one of adolescents, is in an uproar when the first enters. He frowns, shouts, upbraids, accuses, sends a couple of the noisy ones out, dominates ; but loses class goodwill for the evening. An air of resentment is felt. Teaching becomes uphill work. Law has prevailed, but amity has vanished.

But suppose instead that the other tutor has come in. He looks all round, smiles genially, awaits silence, and

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says, "Well, here's a how-d'ye-do. Pity the poor teacher of men and women who has lost his way and got into the kindergarten department. I think it wisest to make an apology and depart." The disarming smile softens any sarcastic sting, the class laughs and feels rebuked without malice, work starts off at a brisk pace, the atmosphere is positive—restless energy discharged by the safety valve of initial high-jinks—and there is less loss on the evening than gain.

Or suppose some wag has put crackling powder on the floor—a slight crackle as the tutor walks near his desk. Tutor One would stop the class, say that no gentleman would behave so disgracefully as to put this powder about, deliver a homily, and threaten dire consequences. Justifiably, but not wisely. Tutor Two would pass the matter quietly over with some chaffing remark, looking perfectly undisturbed, and the work would be uninterrupted.

But it is a sense of *humour* that is wanted, not a facility for cheap jesting. It is a sad spectacle, that of a tutor who makes constant facetious remarks which are greeted with loud guffaws. He thinks he is winning popularity, but he is only gaining the contempt of the better students. The old jokes come out, and he does not perceive that the reception is ironical. Or if the class consists of much older members, he fails to see the pain beneath the tolerant silence.

For joy in our work must be real, not skittish. Deep calls to deep, and skittishness to buffoonery.

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### 7. *Ultimate Purpose*

True personal rhythm does more than enable us to govern our classes well and teach with effect. It somehow shows that we are not mechanical practitioners in our specialist job, but have a larger background of sympathy and knowledge. Without this background we may be successful instructors, but no more.

The more experience we have the better—the more travel, acquaintance with people in all walks of life, knowledge of living processes and interests, anecdotal information. Even knowledge of the methods of curing herrings or colouring kippers with chemicals may quite well come in one day as a source of illustration, and turn a dull topic into a lively one.

To share in the great human interests—sport, the arts, philosophy, nature, religion—is to have a key to every student's heart. To love liberty, and to teach with an abiding sense of the need to educate for a vigorous, formative democracy, is to have a purpose in teaching. It will mean stressing things that matter instead of academic eyewash. Professor Lancelot Hogben tilts a brave lance at the knowledge-for-its-own-sake school: "It is popular among people with an academic training because few of us like to admit the shortcomings of our own intellectual equipment, especially when it is invested with a satisfactory measure of social prestige. It is easier for a university man to feel that he enjoys the best educational facilities of his time than to recognize how little of what he has been taught is of imminent importance."<sup>1</sup> Knowledge should be loved not only

<sup>1</sup> *Education for an Age of Plenty* (British Institute of Adult Education).

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for its own sake, but also for the power it gives to do good practical and constructive service to our own day and generation. If to learn about tinned foods is only to learn how to sell more and more of inferior quality to ruin the health of our customers, then the less learnt the better. We want to train our students to share in an intelligent movement towards a better future, not remain isolated units in a self-centred present.

At a low estimate, we may desire only to train efficient shop assistants. At a high, we ought to teach with other things in mind, motivating our course perhaps by such ideals as that of Bergson :

“Men do not sufficiently realize that their future is in their own hands. Theirs is the task of determining first of all whether they want to go on living or not. Theirs the responsibility, then, for deciding if they want merely to live, or intend to make just the extra effort required for fulfilling on this refractory planet the essential function of the universe, which is a machine for the making of gods.”<sup>1</sup>

Words like these might well be learnt by heart for repeating in moments of discouragement. We need reminding constantly that the world is still a badly organized, beginning-of-things place, and that our teaching may help a little towards improving it.

### 8. Fellowship

To conclude on matters of the appearance, we must not seem to look down on even the weakest of our students. When tempted to, we could do worse than repeat, “There, but for the grace of God, sits myself.”

<sup>1</sup> *The Dual Nature of Morality.*

## CHAPTER VI.—THE VOICE

### 1. *The Badly-produced Voice*

“THAT fellow’s voice gets on my nerves.” “She hasn’t much in the way of looks, but she has a lovely voice.” These are remarks heard every day. In primitive ages (and still in the animal kingdom) a cry is the usual means to signal danger. You can’t see a visual signal made behind the trees, but you can hear a vocal one. So the voice particularly conveys what we feel, and, like the eyes, often gives us away.

John Smith seems to speak through his nose, his words are indistinct or else shrilly penetrating. He has a lean and hungry look, and walks shufflingly. If he went to live in Italy he might become quite a different person. But he lives in muggy Lancashire and breathes through his mouth. Instead of Italy, a surgical operation is probably his only hope. For he has adenoids, some nose malformation, or the like. If he were conscious of his own shortcomings he might do something about it. Instead he goes on tiring out himself and his class. He forgets that adults are keenly sensitive to the human voice.

Henry Brown has a breathy voice. The tone is flaccid and dull. He has bleary eyes, and gives a general impression of flatness, colourlessness. Annoyed because his voice does not carry, he forces it and shouts, going

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bleatingly husky after half an hour. He has bad habits of breathing and articulating, but blames the deaf ears of his auditors that he has to shout. Early bad models or unfavourable conditions have made him what he is, a bad voice-producer.

No obstacle to good teaching is more formidable than an unsatisfactory voice. We need to be more voice-conscious.

### 2. Training

We all have our pianos tuned, and if we play or sing we do our daily dozen. The voice demands the same attention if it is to be a well-kept instrument.

You your ways, I mine. Here are some things one teacher has found useful in training himself and others.

#### KEEPING VOICE-FIT

*Time.* Getting up, going to bed, just before a lecture—or what you will.

*Place.* At a window, in the open, or on the way to the classroom on foot or in car.

*Pose.* Standing, walking, or lying on the ground with knees up.

Depends on circumstances. A good "stretch" first is useful. Chin a little in and up, but easy.

No strain of any kind before, during, or after.

*Action.* Have a rhythmic system of counting, and count four for each section—intake, holding; outbreath, holding. Breathe in with feeling of descent of the diaphragm—so filling the base of the lungs first, and feeling successive inward expansions higher and higher, finishing at a point above the nose.<sup>1</sup>

Hold an almost equal time.

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<sup>1</sup> See excellent diagrams and exercises in *Tennis by Simple Exercises*, by Suzanne Lenglen and Margaret Morris (Heinemann).

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Breathe out with a feeling of ascent of the diaphragm—emptying the base of the lungs first, and feeling successive emptyings up to the sinuses of the nose.

Hold out an almost equal time.

Continue, without strong effort or any kind of shoulder lifting, for about a dozen breaths.

(The idea of holding is to reduce jerkiness, and prevent full inhalings without full exhalings.)

Then (if not in a public place) make the lips elastic by stretching lips vertically apart to their fullest extent—with a lion-like mouth opening—say, ten times ; and stretch them horizontally to their fullest extent, ten times, from a position of ball-like compression.

Then shoot the tongue out (point lowering) in the middle position, left side, right side : thrice each.

Then pretend to yawn, so as to hollow the back of the mouth, and, addressing an imaginary group of people in a room, repeat some favourite lines of prose or verse, articulating fully but not fussily. Keep an open throat, and direct the curve of the voice through the front of the face, forwards and out to the back of the room. Or sing something. Do everything with rhythm and smoothness.

Then—forget it all.

The whole game would take only a couple of minutes as you drive your car or walk slowly to the class. But its influence, practised daily, can be immeasurable. After all, Demosthenes himself was willing to look a fool, walking up steep hills and speaking with a pebble in his mouth.

### *3. Articulation and Pitch*

Articulation is, of course, important, and calls for close attention. But too close attention to it is a short-cut to affectation. Popular rules like "Bite off the end of every word" are dangerous if obeyed to the letter. To articulate with conscious care is to be artificial and irri-

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tating, and to incur the charge of having a "clerical manner."

In regard to pitch, the common English fault is to speak in too high a voice, with a consequent tinny, breathy, or querulous tone. It is important in that case to lower the pitch a tone or two.

But even if the pitch is right, it can become monotonous. There is something soporific in a continual drone. So a slight change of pitch from time to time is advisable: a parenthesis in a lower voice, a bit of stressed advice in a higher. In fact a great deal can be done to modulate and vary the tone of the voice, once the need of it is recognized. A French speaker broadcasting in his own language is usually a model of careful pitch variation; only it is the wrong sort for us, being too mechanical. English demands, above all, that we be *natural*.

### 4. Softness of Tone

A quiet voice in the classroom is a blessed thing. It blesseth him that speaks and him that listens. With adults, stentorian tones and bellowings simply will not do.

There is an art in the soft voice. Take Mr. Lloyd George. No one who was present in the Commons during the crucial debate on whether the Allied armies should or should not be handed over to a unified command under Foch will ever forget it. The House was in truculent mood. Lloyd George's move was resented. There was uproar before the minister rose to speak. In the pandemonium, one might well have expected him to start off with a roar to drown his opponents' cries. He began instead in a scarcely audible whisper. In a

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few moments there was a strained silence to catch his words. His voice did not rise. There were fresh cat-calls, interruptions, disorderly scuffles, yet never did his voice rise. He leapt round to confront the malcontents, and by a gesture dominated them. Then the whispered words went on.

In half an hour interruptions were at an end. He spoke more intensely still, but no louder ; yet every word inevitably penetrated to every corner of the stuffy chamber. Visitors stretched over and whispered to their cronies, "The old boy's winning the day." Relentlessly, softly, Mr. Lloyd George went on. Picturesque images, pistol-shot phrases, unequivocal arguments issued together from the magnetic little figure ; but never a shouted syllable, never a raised tone, to the last. After an hour or more he sat down, while the House, all but a handful, stood up and cheered him to the echo. And Foch got the command.

If the voice is undistinguished, the less is heard of it the better ; if distinguished, it is a pity to ruin it by strain. A soft voice is an implicit invitation to silence and attention. It is ideal for our opening remarks. It hints at reserves of interest and power. It does not weary, but leaves attention free for the matter conveyed. It does not batter the victim into attention, but obtains attention naturally as from an ally.

Later on, we may try a middle voice for variety. Then, a student not attending, we employ a sudden loud tone to make him aware of us ; for though a continual loud tone destroys emphasis, a single moment of it is the most emphatic trick in the speaker's trade. Again we return to the soft or whispered voice ; or, if that does not suit our style, to a subdued middle.

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The best lesson for dramatic brilliance I ever heard was given (it was on Sir Francis Drake) entirely in an intense whisper, whose sole variation was a whisper less intense.

### 5. *Speed, and the Pause*

"He talks like a foreigner." That is what we say in England when any one speaks fast. There is a type of fast and fluent speaker who will press monotonously and furiously on in face of the most open inattention and noisy ragging. He is fit only for coaching individual students.

There is also the slow speaker, who drones on through the yawns and coughs of a resentful but helpless audience. The quick man over-excites his class: the slow man sends it to sleep. The latter has less to worry about.

There is a speed, neither too fast nor too slow, appropriate to most audiences. A safe rule is to begin slow, speaking with deliberation, till the attention of the class is unified and settled. Then it is wise to quicken somewhat, and speak more naturally. For an aside or a climax we may for a short time speak fast; the effect is dramatic. We return to the measured rate. The contrasts relieve monotony, lend emphasis, grip attention.

The most electric contrast is obtained by a pause. "The X Company will sell you a useful article (short pause); the Y Company an ornamental article (short pause); I represent the Z Company, which supplies an article, useful, ornamental and (longer pause) 100 per cent. British." That is a cheap example of the use of the pause, but the principle would work the same in a peroration by Burke. The pause effects a dramatic

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hold-up. It isolates and underlines the phrase that follows. It is the central trick in the technique of public speakers.

The success of the pause depends on exact timing : a fraction too long or too short means a misfire.

Such are a few of the possibilities of technique in speaking. Every training department to-day sets aside time for speech training. The pity is that in adult teaching there is still a widespread "accidentalness" of performance, and that many teachers have "accidentally" a tedious and badly produced voice.

## CHAPTER VII.—UNDERSTANDING TYPES

### 1. *Seeing and Hearing Types*

BEFORE the class comes in, write on the blackboard ten common nouns, *e.g.* "bandstand, pig, cake, moon, cherry, boxer, stone, horse, stage, hat." Cover the writing with a sheet of paper. When the class has come in and settled down, tell them to watch for a given signal, after which you will remove the paper for them to scan the word-list for a period of ten seconds. At the end of that time cover the list up again, and tell the class to write out from memory all the words remembered. When this has been done, remove the paper again, and tell each student to mark his own paper, totalling the words he has got right.

Then, after preparing the class, take another word-list, *e.g.* "cow, window, tree, snuff, razor, saxophone, rabbit, collar, book, water," and read the words aloud at the rate of one a second. Tell the class to listen, and afterwards write out the words remembered; and total them as before. Then ask each student to divide the first result by the second: thus  $\frac{\text{Eye total}}{\text{Ear total}}$ . If the answer

is 1, the student is (in this connection) equally good at eye memory and ear memory. Eye memorizers will have a mark like 1.3, ear memorizers like 0.75. In an

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actual class of ten men, five had an eye mark, two an ear, and three an equal mark. (For a trustworthy result, similar tests should be carried out five or more times, and the marks averaged.)

In any group of students tackling a particular piece of work there may thus be some who will learn better from seeing than hearing (visuals), some the reverse (audiles), and some neutral. Visuals appreciate teaching illustrated by diagrams, pictures, blackboard sketches, and applications dependent on the eye, *e.g.* making drawings, maps, tabulated lists. They tend to be impatient of talk. But the audiles like talk, and learn much from it. They are sensitive to emphasis and change of tone when the teacher speaks; and to wording.

Advertisements in newspapers and on hoardings skilfully combine the two appeals. It is true that "every picture tells a story."

But the visual<sup>1</sup> teacher is apt to forget the audile pupil, the audile teacher the visual pupil. A visual inspector once so praised a teacher's blackboard work for its artistry in coloured chalks, that for the next inspector he outdid himself in inventiveness of design. The lesson was in book-keeping. The second inspector snorted, and threatened a bad report unless all the pretty coloured stuff was cut out. No doubt he was merely a complacent audile; but he gave the teacher many sleepless nights.

Not that visual and audile types are simple and exhaustive. Both may be also strongly touch-conscious,

<sup>1</sup> These terms "visual" and "audile" are here used as though individuals differed greatly. In point of fact, the difference is small; and in a particular case may vanish altogether in the tackling of another kind of work.

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movement, taste, or smell-conscious. People are complicated mixtures of imagery types. If we are teaching cloth weaves, the ideal plan is not to talk about them, or show diagrams of them, or set pupils to read about them, or give specimens to handle, or have specimens reported on and sketched; but to do all of these things. The compound impressions so obtained are much more likely to be remembered than any one single type of impression.

### 2. *The Quick and the Slow*

The scene is the village pub. Three old villagers are seated round a table, smoking churchwarden pipes and now and again sipping their glasses of bitter. After five minutes one says, "That be Farmer Giles's cow." Three minutes pass by. "Nay, it beant, it be Farmer Brown's," says the second. Two minutes pass by. "I'm going," says the third, "there's too much bloomin' argifyin' in this pub."

The exaggeration in a dramatic sketch like the above underlines the accepted idea of the slow-minded bumpkin. Any patter comedians you care to think of will do to underline the opposite type, quick at repartee. In Shakespeare the ideal quick thinker is Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Everybody—bumpkin, wisecrack juggler, and all the range between—is some kind of slow, medium, or quick thinker. Here is the personal rhythm again, in a special manifestation.

Researches into the speed factor in temperament show that besides the factor of quickness of intake and response

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is a second factor closely allied to it, viz. fluency of association.

Ask the class first to write down as many words as possible in one minute. The totals will be the scores. Then ask them to write down in one minute as many things as they can think about connected with "a man taking a tram ride"—in short phrases, the number, not the quality of the ideas, counting. The scoring is by the number of significant words (omitting a, the, and, etc., but counting the subject where repeated). These two tests should show a wide range of score among the students of any ordinary class.

Most of us, of course, are medium type thinkers. But we all know the man who always walks as if late for an appointment, thinks as though the next minute was to be his last, and talks like a gramophone record put on at ninety. And if we begin to tell him an important piece of news, he interrupts us with the remark, "Oh, did you see in the paper that . . ."

The slow type needs no description, but he does need defence. His slowness does not arise from laziness, pose, or a desire to exasperate. It belongs to the very core of his personality: it is unconscious and relatively unchangeable. It is no proof of low intelligence, but is characteristic of all grades of intelligence. The fact is, there are slow professors and quick street urchins, quick yokels and slow city men.

Confusing as all this is, the underlying law is plain. In any classroom are to be found the slow, the medium, and the quick, and every teacher must take cognizance of the fact, and try to maintain some efficient relation between his personal speed and the average personal speed of the class.

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The rule is : open with deliberation, giving the slow-speed students confidence while the quick ones are content to wait ; then speed up gradually to win the attention of the quick students ; returning for the main part of the lesson to an average speed, so as to hold the medium students firmly and not quite lose the others. Whatever the teacher's own speed, he must try to satisfy the average, with occasional tribute to the " outsizes."

Watch your speed, and still more the class speed. Judgment here means much to teaching effectiveness and to discipline.

Perhaps this matter of personal speed and fluency may be at the root of the dislike many people have for jazz music ?

### 3. *Frank and Reserved Types*

John Jones in the back row is silent, brooding, slow, apt to be damped by criticism or sarcasm. Harry Wells in the front is a chatterbox, thoughtless, quick when he cares to work, and thrives on the bitterest jibes. He has a thick skin. (The two types are contrasted to perfection in the Highlander, Robin Oig, and the Englishman, Harry Wakefield, in Sir Walter Scott's short story, *The Two Drovers*.)

Suppose (which would be absurd) we asked the two types to answer the following questionnaire :

1. Is your interest in (a) people, things, actions, or (b) ideas ?
2. In the things you undertake are you (a) happy-go-lucky, (b) cautious ?
3. With people are you (a) open, or (b) secretive ?
4. Do you (a) willingly compromise, or (b) go your own way ?

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5. Do you (a) live in the moment, or (b) daydream ?
6. Do you like (a) being among people (Margate or Blackpool for holidays), or (b) being alone (holidays in out-of-the-way places) ?
7. For reading do you like books about (a) people doing things, or (b) the thoughts and feelings of the characters ?
8. Are you (a) conservative, holding that man is immortal, war natural, marriage satisfactory, human nature unchangeable, work more important than leisure, or (b) anti-conservative, holding the reverse opinions, or (c) objective, considering each problem on its merits ?

The chances are strongly that Harry Wells will vote for (a) all through, and John Jones for (b) ; because they are radically different types, distinguished as extraverts (turned-outs) and introverts (turned-ins). But they are extreme types ; while most people are in between, mixed types (amboverts).

If the teacher is ambovert, he has the advantage of sharing the qualities of all types ; but the strongly extravert or introvert teacher has something of a problem to face.

The extravert teacher is apt to dominate, and have an oppressive effect on the introverts in the class. He likes facts, and has little use for his pupils' ideas and fancies. He is orderly, and despises their patchiness. He finds it easy to hurt John Jones, and takes a pleasure in doing so. Or, if he is soft-hearted, he spoils the poor, dear introvert, so little capable of looking after himself.

The introvert teacher is more likely to suffer in himself than cause intentional suffering to the class. He shrinks from lengthy contact with a horde of people, and is too shy or humourless to tackle the hefty extraverts before him. To him the louts are tiring with their bustle and go, their practicality, and imperviousness to

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gentle criticism and control. Their complacency riles him. They take advantage of his diffident approaches to "pull his leg." They are bored with his scrupulous elaboration of ideas, and disdain of solid facts. They resent his unorthodox opinions. An extremely introverted teacher's life is not a happy one.

So the more balanced we are or can make ourselves, the better for all concerned. The extravert should resist the temptation to occupy the limelight the whole time, while the introvert if he cannot be expansive himself can at least encourage others to be so.

### *4. Repetitive and Adaptable Types*

Give out lined paper and sharp pencils. Tell the class to write for fifteen seconds as fast as possible in small letters and a running hand the letters a b c d ; then (with an interval of no more than five seconds) for fifteen seconds A B C D in block capitals. Repeat the whole process. The whole minute's work, unimpeded as it is by complications, call X. Then instruct to write for fifteen seconds the alternating form a A b B c C d D as many times as possible. Repeat this three times (with the same interval as before), and call this second minute's work, which is complex, Y. Score by dividing the number of letters written down in X by the number in Y.

This test is to show how easily or slowly the student can transfer from one activity to another requiring a fresh conscious control. If the student can adapt himself quickly, he is a low perseverator ; if he cannot, a high perseverator. Standard results are known, by which

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the persons tested can be divided accurately into high perseverators, moderately high, moderately low, and low perseverators.

It is coming to be thought that perseveration is a most important factor in character. High perseverators and low are apt to be difficult and unreliable—and high are worse than low. The medium perseverators are the more stable.

There is little doubt to which type those earnest folk belong who write to the papers from time to time asserting holidays to be a waste of time. Or those who are always trying new "systems" at the gambling tables.

The practical application of knowledge of these types lies in the arrangement of lesson sections. Continual shifting from one activity to another puzzles and fatigues the high and high medium perseverators, while persistence at one activity for too long a time bores and wearies the low medium and low. Planning should provide for a change of occupation at least once in two hours, but not for a change every ten minutes. Change can be from talk to discussion; from demonstration of new processes to working out examples; from oral dictation to blackboard transcription; from handling materials to making notes on them; and so on.

We see, then, how unwise it is to talk or lecture for more than three-quarters of an hour at a stretch. The less advanced the class the more rapidly the lesson should lead on from the teaching of new rules to individual practical exercises on them. To become perseveration-conscious means growing sensitive to responses, and avoiding gross errors in the apportionment of modes and activities.

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### 5. *Awareness of Types*

The seeming complexity of types is probably due to ignorance as yet of the fundamentals of human nature. The main thing for the teacher is to know that there *are* different types, and to keep himself as well balanced as he can, for tactful handling of all. He needs to watch faces, take notice of class responses, and when things do not go well blame himself as much as the class and try out some new line of policy.

"Know thyself," said Solon the wise man. "Know thy students, and manage them through that knowledge" is the moral of this chapter.

## CHAPTER VIII.—INTERLUDE ON TWO W.E.A. CLASSES

### 1. *Applying Methods*

IN a certain mining area there was once a W.E.A. class in literature. Twenty-four folk attended, ranging in age from a woman of twenty to a man of sixty-seven. The bulk of the class had no previous knowledge of the subject, but all were wise about life. The tutor decided to use the little ways of man as the "known" from which to proceed to literature, the "unknown." The story of Ruskin's life, with a number of typical anecdotes, preceded a sizing-up of the man, of whom *Unto This Last* was then shown to be a natural product.

It soon became evident that the class was chiefly ear-conscious, as brave attempts to be useful with the blackboard petered out for want of appreciation. It was thus necessary to do a great deal of talking, in which variety and arrestingness were attempted through humour, picturesque phrasing, and challenging remarks. Where real pictures failed, word pictures were found to succeed. Discussion was lively, particularly after a lecture pattern which consisted of a factual preparation followed by provocative statements with a background of admitted alternative opinions. "Ruskin undoubtedly was mistaken : he was also right in his peculiar way" : an epigram like that was sure to rouse approval and op-

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position. The class became a united body. Half-sessional socials were instituted, and the time that was left over from eating good things was given eagerly to hearing class members read their own compositions aloud.

### *2. Adaptation to the Class*

Unquestionably the most capable at discussion was the oldest member of the class, a genial extravert, popular, and a willing worker. The next ablest were two middle-aged introverts, sarcastic and dry, and a young woman introvert of repressed but promising imagination. It was usual for Harris, the old man, to start questions and discussion, from an irrepressible curiosity and eager intelligence, while the others, after a dour silence, would get drawn in either by a piece of idealism they wished to counter with sharp common sense, or on quiet invitation from the tutor to give their opinions.

The most valuable work done by the class was in discrimination of the qualities and values of a wide variety of prose passages, concerning which discussion was always eager. This work contributed more than did any other to train the students to criticize, discover standards, and qualify themselves to face the mechanical appeals of propaganda to-day without passive surrender.

The class was moderately high in perseveration, so the tutor simplified his early lesson planning (viz. preparation through the Logbook, presentation through a lecture, questions, discussion, and final summing-up of the evening) by cutting out the final review and intermingling questions and discussion. Attention never flagged, so the new allocation of time proved satisfactory.

## . INTERLUDE ON TWO W.E.A. CLASSES

At first the tutor, rather quick-minded, found he was choking discussion by his own fluency and willingness to talk, and by tending to interrupt and move on too fast to a new question. So he took himself in hand, and slowed down a little, counting up to a dozen after any speaker before speaking himself. This improved matters ; though as the class was above average in quickness he had no need to put the brake too artificially on himself.

The class was mixed in many ways, but it clearly liked the tutor to be Man of Personality rather than Man of Method ; yet when he erred too far either way there was sure to be a letter or essay gently hinting at the fault—was the connection of one week's work with another being made clear ? Was the tutor, though interesting, taking up too much of the time and so smothering the activity of the class itself ?

Most of the class were interested in ideas, and found the discussion hour a satisfying outlet ; but others, preferring action and character, and wishful to give them effect, wrote pleading for some time to be given regularly to the dramatic reading of scenes from plays.

Written work was abundant, though distributed very unequally. The older folk, with weak powers of expression, wrote up Logbook reports in their due turn, but otherwise only looked for illustrative passages and copied them out, or brought along relevant cuttings and books. Others, both old and young, wrote vigorously on a variety of themes. The idea-mongers wrote on problems and critical matters, the imaginative wrote poems, stories, essays, plays, a novel. Series were instituted—for a few weeks volunteers wrote character sketches (after lectures on Hazlitt and Stevenson), narrative poems (after ballads), and short stories (after an

## THE ADULT CLASS

anthology of them); but the most successful and lengthy series of all was one of verse epigrams, of which the class were particularly proud.

### *3. Comparison of Abilities*

The surprising thing to the tutor was that there was little to choose between the work of old and young, men and women. The best work of all kinds came from the old man, who after seventy (during a session on drama) wrote his first play, which was very successfully acted. His novel, a leisurely regional and industrial one, was published afterwards, week by week, in the local district newspaper. His critical answers gave evidence of careful research and logical thought.

But excellent too was the young woman, who soon threw off her hesitancy, and showed a real talent in analysis of ideas, criticism, and personal essays, character sketches and stories.

Older students should take courage from realizing that they are never too old, not only to learn but to develop. And women in mixed classes should reject any inferiority attitude with regard to the men.

### *4. An Unwilling Class*

There was once a one-year literature class started by a Woodworkers' Trade Union at a shipbuilding port. It met for the first few lectures in a Cocoa Room, a cavernous place with marble-topped tables swilling with slops. Any room less like a schoolroom would have

## INTERLUDE ON TWO W.E.A. CLASSES

taken some finding. But the place hummed with life when the whole dockyard trade union, more or less, turned up.

That meeting was the tutor's first experience of an adult class. A university extra-mural board had waved a wand, and lo ! there was the class of fifty in the Cocoa Room, and there was the newly appointed tutor wondering what was going to happen next. The crew of working men looked as little like students as a chain-gang. They were lively, noisy, of very mixed ages and looks, dressed in their workaday clothes, and thoroughly disgruntled at being called together on this fool business of starting a Literature Class—on THE ELIZABETHAN PERIOD, of all subjects !

The union secretary had brought the tutor to the place, and wisely sat down beside him as protector. Judging by the looks and the language freely directed at him, the tutor felt the protection was certainly needed. He had with him, stowed away in his pocket, elaborate notes of a first lecture on Elizabeth's glorious reign, but he instinctively kept them hidden from sight, and tried to look as much as possible like a visitor who had just dropped in for a chat.

The secretary, a plump, sardonic fellow, ticked off the names of those present, cleared his throat, and introduced the tutor. There was no mistaking the fact that he thought there was going to be an awkward scene. Then, with a whisper to the tutor to keep his hair on and not be too highbrow if he valued his skin, he pushed him up to address the crowd. The tutor's mind was a blank. Nothing like this had ever happened to him before. He just listened to himself speaking, and was surprised to hear a silly joke cracked, at which the grizzly

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audience laughed heartily, in encouragement if not appreciation. Then the voice went on to say that the audience obviously considered lectures on the Elizabethan, or any other period, a waste of time, and something of an insult when shipping was in such a bad way and work was rare. But (the voice went on) the audience might after all be wrong ; or it might be right. Anyhow, it would be unfair to go on as though all were agreed. He did not propose to lecture (ironical applause), but to hold a public debate on the issue (hear, hear). Would some one signify willingness to be the first speaker on a motion that the proposed class should be dropped as a waste of time ? (A dozen hands. The secretary named two as proposer and seconder.) Would anybody oppose the motion ? (Apparently no one ; but the secretary rallied one or two, who finally agreed to speak.)

With the tutor as chairman, the debate began. It was candid, it was vociferous, it was funny. The audience listened intently enough, but flung off into asides and objections with no restriction of language or taste. The chief points made were that no one had felt the slightest desire for a class, they did not want to be turned into a lot of snobs, and no lectures on the Elizabethan or any other period would add a brass farthing to their wages.

The opposers, however, not only stood their ground, but took the offensive. They appealed successfully to the thoroughly decent natures of those seemingly hard-bitten men. And they sat down to cheers. After lengthy ding-dong open discussion there was a cry for the tutor to give his views. Carried on the tide of good feeling the tutor did so. When the vote was taken those for the motion numbered fewer than a dozen !

The meeting broke up in the friendliest spirit. For

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several weeks the class, still numbering nearly fifty, met in the Cocoa Room, and was heartily appreciative. Then came the cataclysm. An available school had been found, cleaner, better lit, more in keeping with a "class." There was a warning storm of protest: the men did not want to feel they were back at school again—their memories were too bitter. And at the first meeting in the prim and spruce schoolroom the numbers had fallen to a small remnant. The shrewd secretary went round, and managed to screw the number up to about twenty; but the palmy days were over. "School" had killed the class.

There is a moral somewhere.

## CHAPTER IX.—THE CONCRETE IN WORD

### 1. *Simplicity a Virtue*

"I speak to them as man to man, not as a Regius Professor to his maid-of-all-work."—WYNDHAM LEWIS : *Blasting and Bombardiering*.

AN evening school teacher was giving a lesson on the Theory of Business Statistics. He began by slowly dictating the following definition : "The Theory of Business Statistics consists in the numerical measurement of the various phenomena relating to an undertaking in order to act as a guide in the future administration of the concern." The class sat back in despair, and the teacher was astounded when one student, much daring, said the statement was not quite clear. "What could be clearer?" asked the teacher. The critic then set to work and produced the reply : "The tabulating of a firm's records to serve as a guide for its future conduct and development."

The teacher in question was intelligent and able, but he held the idea that the longer the words the deeper the meaning. Because he was keen, he wanted to impress ; and he thought this was the way. When questioned, he put the blame on his early training : probably not without reason.

Less often than formerly, but still far too often, the compositions that earn praise in elementary and secondary

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schools are the flowery ones. Use only enough adjectives, put in only sufficient sentiment, and you get a good mark. As a child of nine you write on spring, but never on that more appetising affair, spring onions. You descant on the beautiful green of the grass and the trees, but not on the green in your eye as you write. Then as a reward you are sent into the next class to read the "essay" aloud. At fifteen you write on the Coronation, and use phrases like "all the colours of the rainbow," "oriental splendour"; and win praise again. Or you concoct some abstract definition, and are hailed as one of the wise. Confirmed by now in a taste for the florid, the sentimental, or the abstract, you become yourself a teacher and hand on the torch.

Human nature itself conspires against you. It is very human to think speaking in public must be highbrow, as different as can be from familiar talk; and to lay on the gilt with a trowel. The Great War cleared much of this affectation away, but not all of it. The leaning to-day is towards the simple and direct. The leaning in adult teaching should always be in that direction, and the adult teacher must wage constant war against pedantry, pomposity, and mush.

Attention follows the line of interest. The line of interest to-day is not the sumptuous beauty of polysyllables, but the sharply defined, the practical, the crisp. Life is too short to waste on obscurities and frills.

### *2. Likewise Selection*

Attention fades before anything muddled. Yet the notes of lessons of many part-time teachers of adults

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have to be seen to be believed. The notion of having any plan at all must strike these teachers as a huge joke. Their idea of putting a matter over is like "a sick headache in a noisy street."

Order is Heaven's first law. In teaching it is also the last.

Clear expression depends on clear planning, and clear planning on limitation of material. No one expects clearness of any sort from a teacher (not so rare) who prepares as much material to teach in one lesson as would properly take six.

There was once an over-conscientious W.E.A. tutor who filled fat red exercise books with unending details to serve up to his class. It happened that his journey to the class took him across a dock bridge, and he travelled by bicycle. One night he set off against a stiff headwind. Crossing the open bridge he skidded, his bundle of notebooks flew off, and the wind swept them away into the dock below. He was at his wit's end what to do about his class; but at length went on, and gave his lecture—what he could remember of it—from memory. He missed sections out, gave others in impromptu form; and bitterly regretted the mishap on the bridge.

In the discussion hour his spirits lifted when he found things go better than ever before. Then at the close the class secretary congratulated him on the lecture and general handling of the class that night, "You see, Mr. Earnest, you weren't so heavy on our heads as you usually are. Perhaps in future . . ."

Mr. Earnest had learnt his lesson, and never again prepared superfluous material. His rule for quantity was now, "As much as I should give if I lost my notes again in the India dock." He also learnt not to keep too

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rigidly to plans formed beforehand, but to adapt the plans freely to the visible needs of the class. A student might well by a question reveal an abyss of ignorance on some matter the tutor thought already known by everybody in the class ; and so the lecture time would have to be spent in getting that matter cleared up first.

The best lessons, while being planned and orderly, have something non-rigid of the teacher's own personality at the core. There is only one person as bad as the man without method, and that is the man with too much.

### *3. Linking Abstract with Concrete*

Still the question remains : what about expression, the putting of the lesson into words ? Now that we have limited our material, tell us that !

First there is the nuisance of those abstract nouns. Mr. A. B. Stract is starting a lesson on " Customers and Their Motives for Buying." The onlooker anticipates a good opening with a few anecdotes about customers and their types, leading on to some humorous labelling of motives for buying at a particular shop. The lesson actually begins : " There are five chief buying motives. They are—please write them down carefully—comfort, prestige, economy, convenience, security." Mr. Stract fondly supposes that he has made the whole matter clear, and left an indelible impression on every mind.

But he has started at the wrong end, namely, the abstract. He should first have given an example of a buying situation from which the class could infer the motive of comfort ; and then have had the situation reported in their notebooks for permanent association

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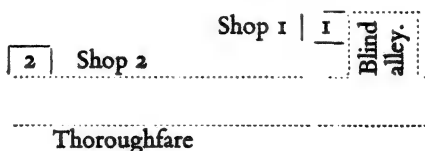
with the idea. Similarly, he should not airily say, "Every shopkeeper must have a ready knowledge of the location of his stock," but, "Every clothier should know in which drawer the 30s. striped silk pyjamas are kept." Or again, in a blackboard summary a teacher might put :

SHOPS. Special features : (1) Accessibility.

But for an elementary class he would do better to put :

SHOPS. Points to watch for :

1. Whether on good route ; easy to get at. Thus not up a blind alley.



= ACCESSIBILITY.

The students would copy this diagram from the board, and learn the abstract by immediate association with the concrete.

Definitions, if learnt at all—it is better to have too few than too many—should be written down in distinctive form, say in red ink and block capitals, with examples, and, wherever feasible, diagrams and sketches. Even outlines, almost always dull, can look agreeable with an arresting lay-out and definite pictures (in words or drawings).

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### 4. *Shape in the Sentence*

In a politician it is a virtue to give lengthy and evasive answers. The late Lord Balfour was supreme at this accomplishment. He could say nothing with elegant elaboration.

That is not the art of the teacher, whose duty it is to say something definite in the fewest words. Every sentence should have outline, shape. Oh those intolerable hours spent in listening to a lecturer droning out endless flat sentences that might begin or end anywhere or nowhere!—the glib speaker, glassily verbose. Or to a Morse Code speaker, jerking out unconstructed phrases—the earless talker, with little language and less grammar! A thing of ugliness is a pain for ever. Speech with “shape” is a continual joy.

A means of achieving good speech is to have, as it were, a gramophone in the ear, for playing imaginary records of one's own given pattern. The man with a live and balanced personality should put on records with balanced and live rhythms. As he listens to these rhythms within, he patterns his words, phrases, sentences, accordingly. “I lisped in numbers, for the numbers came,” said Pope. If the record is jerky, then he ought to replace it. As long as it has effective music and rhythm, however, it may have what character it pleases. A good way to make a “record” is to read and re-read a favourite passage of vigorous exposition by a good writer; then to examine it to see how it is put together; finally to learn it by heart for frequent repetition. (A suitable writer is Mr. H. G. Wells—there is a clear-cut clarity about his best work.) This will form the control;

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not, of course, to turn out a set and stilted pattern, but to fix a standard form to deviate from continually without ever quite deserting.

### 5. *Analysis of a Good Model*

A standard maker of power-type patterns for exposition is the Victorian writer, Lord Macaulay, in a chapter like the Third of the *History of England*. This chapter is about the England of Charles II.—population, revenue, fighting forces, workers and gentry, towns and cities, sciences and arts. Of Macaulay Lord Balfour wrote: "I became his fascinated admirer. His style delighted me. . . . He was not a profound thinker, nevertheless he was, from my point of view, something much more important. He was a showman of supreme genius. The services which this great gift enabled him to render me, as to countless others of my generation, were inestimable, and I have always remembered them with gratitude."<sup>1</sup>

Macaulay's art is obvious, but so much the better can one learn from him. Even though nowadays more naturalness is aimed at—more approximation to ordinary talk—his example is useful; in good time one can ease off his weight.

His principal devices are contrast and the use of the concrete, with ruthless simplification of facts.

His use of the concrete is much like that already illustrated in this chapter; he replaces ideas by instances, and leaves a definite picture in the reader's mind. An

<sup>1</sup> *Chapters of Autobiography*. Lord Balfour was a sound stylist when he wished.

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average writer might be saying, "The house chaplain of that period was invited to enjoy the substantial parts of the family meals, but not the titbits, though he was expected to offer up thanks as though he had had both." But in Macaulay's manner this becomes, "He might fill himself with the corned beef and the carrots ; but, as soon as the tarts and cheese-cakes made their appearance, he quitted his seat, and stood aloof till he was summoned to return thanks for the repast, from a great part of which he had been excluded." Admitted the wording is Victorian—"made their appearance," "quitted his seat," "repast"—but the method is universally applicable. Keep to homelier phrasing—the "corned beef and carrots"—and this method will make any topic vivid.

The concrete instance is often worked up on a pattern of contrast : "When the lord of a Lincolnshire or Shropshire manor appeared in Fleet Street, he was as easily distinguished from the resident population as a Turk or a Lascar." Translated into the abstract that would run tamely, "There was a marked difference between Londoner and provincial visitor."

The rich effect of the following is typical : "Drink was served to guests in goblets of pure gold. The very tongs were of silver. Pictures by Italian masters adorned the walls." He might only have written : "Everything was luxurious."

Often he lightens the historical scene with droll humour. When he might have written, "Buxton was the Derbyshire watering-place, but the lodgings were poor," he wrote instead, "The gentry of Derbyshire repaired to Buxton, where they were lodged in low rooms under bare rafters, and regaled with oatcake, and

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with a viand which the hosts called mutton, but which the guests suspected to be dog." Again the words are Victorian, just a little pompous, but the effect stands.

He can also compress his contrasts so brilliantly that they become unforgettable, like his famous epigram on the fleet: "There were gentlemen and there were seamen in the navy of Charles the Second. But the seamen were not gentlemen; and the gentlemen were not seamen."

Where any facts are concerned, but especially numbers, he habitually simplifies (unfortunately sometimes at the cost of truth). Reading him, one would think history had conveniently arranged to make all numbers round numbers. Of Manchester he says, "That wonderful emporium, which in population and wealth far surpasses capitals so much renowned as Berlin, Madrid, and Lisbon, was then a mean and ill-built market town, containing under six thousand people. It then had not a single Press. It now supports a hundred printing establishments. It then had not a single coach. It now supports twenty coach-makers." The crisp sentences echo the slick facts, all simplified.

Here is another example. "England then had less than one-third of her present (1848) population, and less than three times the population which is now collected in her gigantic capital." Again: "The whole non-effective charge, military and naval, can scarcely have exceeded ten thousand pounds. It now exceeds ten thousand pounds a day."

If one gives exact numbers later, there can be little harm in using this means to make them at first seem deceptively simple.

Macaulay is always clear and emphatic. The music

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of his words is like that of a brass band : bold consonants, round vowels, marching beat. His curves are clipped, the sentences often dramatically short. Even his longer sentences obey the drum-beat, and roll urgently with semi-coloned halts. If ever a writer knew the value of "shape" it was Macaulay.

The result is that the Third Chapter, though it describes no battles or revolutions, but only England and its social system in 1685, is as fascinating as any hairbreadth escape in a sword and cape novel.

### *6. The Live Approach*

Concrete images—simplified facts—pointed contrasts ; those will always arouse the attention and hold the interest of a class. To be ready with them one's own mind must be well furnished with interesting facts, coloured settings, groups of arresting ideas and associations. Newspapers, books, the radio and cinema, travel, contacts with all sorts of people, are fruitful sources of material.

### *7. Words and Word-Use.*

In addressing a class or discussion group to be definite is half the battle. Avoid, as a general rule, words or phrases like "rather," "very very," "perhaps," "doubtless," "of course"; prefer the active to the passive voice—"retailers sell bacon at" to "bacon is sold by retailers at." Words like "nice," "greatly," "good," "bad" must be used with care, or they become woolly. A "good" stores manager might be one of: able,

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active, clever, capable, enterprising, ingenious, intelligent, reliable, systematic, church-going, and the like. (The standard storehouse of such lists of words is Roget's *Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases*, in Dent's "Everyman Library.") Cluttering phrases like "in regard to," "in the matter of" lead to vagueness, and a credit mark should go to expression every time one of these is avoided. "In regard to the matter we dealt with in the lecture last week" would be clearer as, "Last week's subject." Hackneyed phrases or clichés like "last but not least" hamper clear statement. Other examples can be easily found in any cheap newspaper.

The countless host of words in English makes for these smudged effects, mere outpourings of half-meaningless phrases. To set one's English in order might indeed well begin with reducing the number of words used, and using them as densely and sharply as possible. C. K. Ogden's list of 850 common words (*Basic English*, Kegan Paul) is worth using for a time; with these words alone most things can be said, and said effectively.

While practising definiteness, one can make use too of repetition. "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done." "They find nothing but sand where, an hour before, they had seen a lake. They turn their eyes and see a lake where, an hour before, they were toiling through sand" (Macaulay). Only a shade less definite is the repeat pattern of construction with parallel words: "I came. I saw. I conquered." "To err is human, to forgive divine."

Repetition of key words makes for suggestion as well as definition. As a tiny child I heard a long sermon in which the word "immortality" occurred over and over

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again. I had no idea what the word meant. But like the chorus of a lilting song, it stuck. It was hypnotic. And the body of that sermon could easily be constructed to-day from that single haunting key-word. Hundreds of less artful sermons have meantime faded into nothingness !

When definiteness of word use has become second nature, it is time to refine on the process and try to increase vocabulary so that it will express finer shades of meaning. First one learns to call a spade a spade, and not "an agricultural implement" : then to call it not a spade but a garden spade or a post spade. First whole numbers : later, decimal parts.

Range of vocabulary increases partly by substituting better words for those we already use—*e.g.* we are gravelled for a word, and use a roundabout description, till later we come across the exact word somewhere—and partly by the addition of technical and other words belonging to fresh fields of knowledge. For both purposes a notebook is useful. Such additions will come about in any event, but they can be made more rapidly by resolve and effort. Technical words are exact, and have prestige value (fancy the bridge opponent previously overheard saying, "I've just had a bluff one no-trump overcall without a stopper in the bid suit" !). They are worth carefully learning. "That's the word I've been looking for," or "I'd like to use that phrase myself," should be the signal for taking out a notebook and jotting it down. Words are the tools of the teacher's trade, and, like saws and planes, need keeping in good order.

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### 8. *Humour and Paradox*

The mathematical definition of a straight line is "the shortest distance between two points"—which is succinct but not exciting. Professor D'Arcy Thompson put it as "the path pursued by an ecclesiastic with a bull behind him and a bishopric in front." Such a definition spoken for the first time would make any lecture immortal.

Whimsical, picturesque humour, provided it is not facetious and forced, is a sure means of enlivening exposition. The right voice and face are requisite to its success. The whimsical man cannot help seeing how funny things would have been if they had not been as they are, and how funny they are compared with what they might have been ! If in a lesson on Tea the tutor dilates for a moment on what the result would have been in Western Europe if tea had proved as powerful a drug as opium, the class will promptly grasp how exciting the idea of the familiar tea leaf can be. It will grasp, also, that the tutor does not take himself or his subject too seriously.

Fireworks of any sort in speech are enriched by a good pattern of sound. "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled pepper." The easy way to effective sound is to repeat the same consonants or vowels. The game is readily learnt ; but painful if overdone, as in American newspaper headlines. We have only to replace "in one day many people enter a shop" by "in a single day we serve in the shop barbers and blacksmiths, clerks and caddies, lorrymen and lawyers, servant maids and service men ;" and the trick is done.

But for discussion purposes the typical device is one

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more of ideas than of alliteration. It is to turn well-known sayings and accepted opinions upside down. "Honesty is the worst policy." "Too true to be good." "The Child is father of the Man" (startling enough when Wordsworth wrote it). "The early worm is caught by the bird." "Take care of the pounds, the pence will take care of themselves." Used judiciously, paradox is effective in checking the complacent who open their remarks by saying, "No one will deny," or "Of course, there is only one possible opinion a sensible person can hold on this matter." The truth is there never yet was an opinion that every one would agree with, from "two and two make four" to what is the present state of the weather.

### 9. Plainness and Vigour

This is not to make out a case for mere cleverness ; and still less for speech-faddiness. Purism is a fault like vulgarity. Truth is more important than fireworks, matter than manner. Vital words *are* better than pretty patterns or "correct" words that have decayed into the academic and "artificial." Too many people make a fuss about "good English" without realizing that what they are asking for is only museum English. Nor is inoffensive smoothness the only thing to aim at : the abrupt, the violent, are good shock tactics. The grace of standard phrasing sometimes needs the "guts" of colloquial terms, slang, and Americanisms. Used too often these are vulgar and tiresome, but used with tact they can be instant in suggestion. The vagueness of "Shaw is an important vehicle of protest against false

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notions, which he cleverly refutes," vanishes in "Shaw debunks shoddy ideas."

Nor is one without good company in preferring plain words. Molière read his plays to his washerwoman. When she missed his meaning he knew he was too fine. Montaigne claimed to write the language of the market halls. The motto of Greek writing is, "Nothing too much." Dr. W. H. D. Rouse has translated that greatest of Greek stories, the *Odyssey*, into pithy, homely English. He uses such phrases as "good-for-nothing fool," "docking his own tail," "no one barred," "not a bad hand at any game that's going," "flummoxed." They are not academic, but they convey Homer.

(For a more advanced consideration of this problem see Dobrée and Read's *The London Book of English Prose* (Eyre and Spottiswoode), and the last chapters of Dobrée's *Modern Prose Style* (Oxford).)

For speaking well, reading should be a help; particularly if one "reads-aloud-silently." Then one seems to hear one's own voice saying the words. But the writers should be intelligent and direct. The classics have their place, but modern models are essential if the tone and *tempo* of to-day are to be caught. Somerset Maugham has classical simplicity<sup>1</sup>; G. B. Shaw is strong and sinewy; G. K. Chesterton had the gifts of epigram and verve; Aldous Huxley is supple in ex-

<sup>1</sup> For example, in his *The Summing-Up* (Heinemann, 1938).

His view on diction is characteristic: "One should write in the manner of one's period. I should not hesitate to use the common phrases of the day, knowing that their vogue was ephemeral, or slang, though aware that in ten years it might be incomprehensible, if they gave vividness and actuality. If the style has a classical form it can support the discreet use of a phraseology that has only a local and temporary aptness." Of course, everything depends on the word "discreet."

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position, Sir James Jeans round. There is directness in David Garnett, still greater in Ernest Hemingway. Models of all kinds abound to-day.

But pray don't sit at the feet of Carlyle or Dr. Johnson.

### *10. Brightness no Crime*

Vigorous, coloured expression in words is a priceless asset to the adult tutor. It raises him above an automatic machine—classes don't like automatic machines. It gives to his teaching juice, tang, meat; incantational power and humanity.

There is some authority even in England for brightness and gusto. Shakespeare and Dickens had it, and they were English enough. Humour is not yet a criminal offence, or style a proof of high treason. But these plain facts seem to have quite escaped thousands of those who lecture and teach, so that the common conception of a pedagogue is that of a humourless pettifogger out of touch with the pulse of life.

It is high time the tradition was changed.

## CHAPTER X.—THE CONCRETE IN DEED

### 1. *Use of the Blackboard*

WHAT can the teacher do, or direct his students to do, that will give the satisfaction of change, movement, action—the practical? What can be done to break up the passive, bored placidity of talking teacher and heeding class?

The main thing is to set adequate and various jobs to do. In pure lecturing, discussion group leading, and the like, this is not needful; but it can make all the difference in evening school work, or the real *teaching* of adult students.

The characteristic primary action in all teaching is that of writing or drawing on the blackboard (in years to come the yellow board?<sup>1</sup>). The teacher is doing something. There is movement to regard, not sound. Moreover, the neat, purposeful covering of the board gives instant suggestion of efficiency. Summary, reference, illustration accompany the teaching promptly and attractively.

Yet most inexperienced teachers neglect the blackboard, merely jotting down the spelling of a word or indicating the beginnings of a diagram. They do not perceive that

<sup>1</sup> See W. D. Seymour, *Improving the Blackboard*. (National Institute of Industrial Psychology.)

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effective lay-out is as important for teaching impressively as for advertising or dressing a shop window. They even neglect neatness and legibility. The scraggy, or bulbous, or minute, or elephantine, or jigsaw-puzzle writing to be seen nightly on blackboards would make the Recording Angel weep ; besides misspunctuations, misspellings, inaccuracies.

Some blackboards do receive the care and attention they deserve. The arithmetic or book-keeping is clearly set out, with indication of steps, and coloured helps for the eye. In history the items of cause and effect are ranged in straight-edged simplicity as part of a unified design. In economics appropriate graphs and statistical tables impose their story at sight. In engineering, exact diagrams and associated formulæ invite the student to copy and learn. In information lessons trim summaries and columned technical words render even unattractive material lucid and memorable.

But in geography the drawing of maps on the blackboard may be made dramatic by incompleteness. The ingenious draughtsman first draws only part of the map, then goes on teaching before adding the next part, while the class strives to guess what that part will be. The same method applies to subjects involving plans or diagrams.

One way and another most sound teachers find the blackboard a valuable instrument for communication with the class. They fashion a technique of their own. This the prentice teacher would do well to develop for himself as early as possible.

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### 2. *Demonstration*

Demonstration—*showing* how to do a thing or what to look for in an object—is a valuable mode in all practical subjects. The examination of specimens is more effective than the learning of lists of qualities as set forth in lecture or book. This fact is obvious ; but many supporting procedures may not be so, as, for instance, the collection by students of trade newspaper cuttings, the making of graphs and plans, the discovery of facts in regard to local history, government, unemployment, and trade. Visits to museums, factories, exhibitions are useful, especially if preceded by lectures, discussions, and hints as to what should be looked for, and followed up by comparisons of impressions gained. Likewise, exhibitions of students' finished work often arouse co-operative effort, and give the participants a healthy feeling of achievement.

All these are regular features of adult educational practice.

### 3. *Screen Illustration*

Allied with these means of giving life and practicality to the teaching of certain subjects are others the purpose of which is to present visual illustrations by projection on a screen. The subject is one of growing intricacy and importance, and can be only briefly referred to here ; but the teacher with a strong interest in pictorial illustration would be well advised to follow up the inquiry further.

The simplest projector is the epidiascope (it has other

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names, quite as unpleasing). It is a kind of magic lantern in which an electric light (with power drawn from the classroom terminal) throws on to a portable screen an enlarged image of a diagram or picture on the page of a book. A whole class is thus enabled to enjoy together a full view of the illustration, which the teacher would otherwise have to pass round laboriously from hand to hand. The epidiascope requires no slides; nor even that the given page should be detached from the book to which it belongs. Epidiascopes though expensive are now quite commonly used.<sup>1</sup>

Lantern illustration has the drawback of the necessity for slides, which are heavy to carry and expensive to make or loan. But for public lectures, and subjects like biology, physiology, and first aid, the trouble is amply repaid.

In the United States a popular form of projection is that of Audi-Vision, the "still-talkie." This suits the numerous teachers who believe that still pictures are better than moving ones for serious instruction—the moving may merely excite or amuse.

Finally there is the moving film, whether silent or talking. This gives a clear and concise analysis of processes, stimulates interest in the wider aspects of the subjects concerned, increases receptivity, and assists memorizing. The moving picture is by its nature best suited for teaching subjects which are basically movement ones, like the various branches of biology, industrial processes, natural history, physical education, and sport. (The majority of films so far made are geographical, but non-movement geography could be taught just as well by lantern slides.)

<sup>1</sup> See *Choosing a School Projector* (British Film Institute).

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Another type of film specially serviceable for teaching purposes is that presenting a moving diagram, with arrows pointing out the focus of attention.

There are now thousands of educational films for hire, many (e.g. the one showing the formation of cumulus clouds) of high standard as films and as teaching accessories. This is all to the good, as the fault of most teaching is thinness, unreality, abstraction, which films can do much to rectify. Nor do films mean any displacement of the teacher : they are simply illustrative, and cannot provide that interplay between teacher and class which is a necessity of instruction. But their use does involve its own special planning. They demand the right timing within the scheme of the lesson, the right introduction to relate them to the course of work being followed, and the right reviewing afterwards.

### *4. Wireless and other Discussion Talks*

In adult teaching it is important that the students should acquire a background of general ideas on questions of public importance. One of the best means of achieving this end is by encouraging classes to listen to broadcast talks, which bring the leaders of contemporary thought to the fireside. Passive listening has its value, but active listening with a view to inquiry and discussion afterwards is much more educative. A class following a course in Retail Distribution could suitably, in scheduled time or on another evening, form a Wireless Discussion Group in connection with a B.B.C. Talks Series like that on Markets and Men or on A Nation of Shoppers. Each week a different student might act as leader, preparing

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the ground beforehand in order to be able to elucidate points in the broadcast talk, and to steer the discussion clear of vague generalities. He would be responsible for choosing and wording the two or three questions to be discussed, and would wind up the occasion by formulating the general sense of the opinions put forward.

The enterprising teacher in the less mechanical subjects welcomes discussion on the part of his class ; and if no suitable broadcast talks series is available, he may at times have recourse to planning out his own lectures with the purpose of arousing opposition of views. Thus in taking a building class he might plan out his lecture under three heads, each raising controversial issues. For example :

### *Section of Talk.*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. People buy decorated objects because they involve more labour and look costly. | Are people mistaken in wanting highly decorated goods ?     |
| 2. Houses are built rather for letting than for living in.                        | Should there be training in taste for apprentice builders ? |
| 3. Buildings to-day are austere, with emphasis on glass and steel.                | Are modern houses comfortable ?                             |

## 5. Debates

Debate, unlike discussion, is apt to degenerate into the artificial adoption of a given view and a pretentious onslaught on the opposite view regardless of whether it has any virtue or not. It can be warfare rather than welfare of minds and tongues, encouraging cocksureness more

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than tolerant consideration. Debate leads less surely to truth than does discussion ; but it promotes readiness and quickness of mind, and pleases many students by the spectacular opportunities it offers.

Used occasionally, debates have their place in the classroom to give a kind of grand finale to intermittent outbreaks of difference of opinion. A class in Retail Distribution may comprise both co-operative stores assistants and others from private concerns. These may often tilt at each other, without any definite outcome. On some night of less than ordinary importance (when from some anticipated cause the numbers are low) an hour can be set aside for a debate on Co-operation *v.* Private Enterprise. Any class will enjoy helping to prepare material, to frame the wording of the motion, and to learn the formalities of full-dress debate.

At first debates tend to fizzle out quickly. Unpractised speakers are unable to express themselves simply and straightforwardly, and find it hard to deal with more than one point. They are bitty and dogmatic ; they keep veering away from the point at issue ; they have no idea when and how to conclude, so they stand nervously fidgeting or else abruptly collapse into their seat. They forget to address the chair, resort to personalities, wobble in their English. As a net result, debates often fail to produce any coherence of effect.

When students have learnt to rise and speak quickly in succession without the awkward gap prevalent in earlier debates while the chairman gazed at his watch for the prescribed minute or half-minute, and when they remember to close with a sentence expressing definite support of or opposition to the motion "before the House," debates begin to have unity and shape ; but

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even then debating is "caviare to the general," and soon tends to become a weariness of the flesh. Informal discussion is much more in line with modern thought and practice.

### *6. Private Reading and the Question of Speed*

Less strenuous but more important as a student activity is private reading. In addition to that narrowly belonging to any given course of study is the wider reading that enables the student to keep abreast of new developments in his subject or industry. For this latter aspect of reading many students need some elementary instruction in the use of libraries, *e.g.* how to consult card index catalogues and to locate books classified on the Dewey system. The teacher should frequently refer to books for further reading, dictating their title, author, publisher, and date. He may recommend specific methods of keeping records of books read, and ask for such records to be kept and submitted to him for inspection. In the cities, many teachers make use of the central library service of cyclostyled book-lists drawn up specially in relation to their own syllabuses. Teachers perform a useful service, indeed, if they only inquire how many of their students possess public library tickets, and strongly encourage non-borrowers to join the libraries. Obvious as all this sounds, it is seldom attempted; yet it can make a big difference to the majority of students.

In spite of the encroachment of cinema and wireless, there is statistical evidence for believing that the reading habit continues to spread. The sheer quantity of reading requisite for keeping in touch with new develop-

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ments in almost every department of knowledge is rapidly increasing. It is said that to-day a private secretary has to do six times as much reading as in 1900. All the greater is the reason for adult teachers attempting to increase the speed of reading by students. Speed of reading is not fixed by nature, but largely by early acquired habit; and few adults, without direct encouragement from a teacher, read as fast as they could.

Thanks to research by such institutions as the New York University Reading Clinic, the nature of the reading process is now no longer a matter of conjecture. In reading, the eyes do not move evenly from left to right, but by jerks; they hop, stay a while to give time for the sense to sink home, sometimes slip some distance back again, then make another hop. For each reader the number of words scanned per hop is fairly uniform—as with typewriting and shorthand speeds. For an ordinary educated reader the standard hop is about 1.2 words; while for a first-class reader it is five to six words. (Macaulay, reported to have been able to read any book in half an hour, must have had a record “hop.”)

But it is the eye-pauses that absorb most of the total reading time, viz. 94 per cent. They, too, are uniform for each reader.

An untrained adult is estimated to read about 200 words a minute, making 120 pauses and 23 glances back. A secondary-school trained adult reaches 325 words, making 80 pauses and 10 glances back. In a certain business office, reading tests gave the youngest typist 273 words a minute, the oldest 461, and the manager 600. The range is therefore extremely wide; indeed an American boy with abnormally sensitive eyes

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is reported to have a reading speed of 2,202 words a minute !

Two facts require underlining, viz. that every one can increase his reading speed, and that quick reading assists the learning and retention processes. Teachers of adults could do much to help students by acquainting them with these facts about reading, and then encouraging regular speed practices. First each student should choose from a favourite book some interesting passage of a couple of pages or so in length. Then he should read it over and over while trying all the time to increase the number of words scanned in each hop. Later he should look for key words and phrases as stepping-stones to increased speed through the shortening of pauses and reduction of the number of glances back. Finally, he should aim at a smooth, rapid rhythm.

Eventually, the student will have a kind of three-speed reading gear, for difficult, medium, and easy texts and articles.

### 7. *Dramatic Illustration*

Any live teacher giving a lesson in Salesmanship will naturally find himself acting the parts of customer and salesman as a means of getting his ideas vividly across. A talent for mimicry will find a hundred opportunities for employment in illustration of what to do and what not to do. And students will respond eagerly, free from the normal routine of formal exposition.

A still more dramatic mode, suitable for odd nights and appropriate subjects and classes, is the production of a little play. This should relate to some matter in the syllabus of the class. It may be prepared by a student,

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a small committee, or the tutor himself. First a theme has to be agreed upon, then a plot fashioned and the chief character-types fixed: up to this point a committee can sometimes be helpful. But only an individual can undertake the writing of the dialogue and the final shaping of the play. Rehearsals (outside scheduled hours) under a competent producer precede the presentation, which may take place in connection with a special lecture, or around Christmas (in the hour following the official class meeting), or on the opening day of the session to get things going with a swing.

This dramatic plan is recommended solely to drama-minded teachers who would enjoy putting it into practice. Of the kind of sketch feasible, here is a light-hearted example written by a Retail Distribution student to illustrate business "tact" in handling customers who make complaints. (The student in question had no inkling he could write a play, until he had to do so on request, when he discovered he could write at short notice on almost any topic.)

## BUSINESS AS USUAL

### SCENE I

#### *Tradesmen's Entrance of "My Guest"*

*Maid answering door to Vanman from New Stores, Ltd.*

*Vanman.* Mrs. Mee: Parcel from New Stores.

*Maid.* Oh! just a minute, the mistress wants to see you! [*Exit.*]

[*Enter Mrs. Mee.*]

*Vanman.* Good-morning, mum.

*Mrs. Mee.* Are you the regular man?

*Vanman.* Yes, mum.

*Mrs. Mee.* Well, I've a complaint to make. I'm just about tired

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of your people. There's an item missing from my order almost every week ; and last Friday I was put to a great deal of inconvenience because the mayonnaise had been left out. Isn't it any one's job to see to orders ?

*Vanman.* Oh yes, mum. We've a special order department which does nothing else but get orders ready for dispatch.

*Mrs. Mee.* Well, there must be some bright lads amongst them, or perhaps they're those blondes I've seen—light-headed in more senses than one. Anyway, I've had about enough of it, and I'll give New Stores one more chance, and that's all. I've decided to see your manager, and find out if he can prevent the annoyance. Who do I ask for ?

*Vanman.* Better see Mr. Dodds, mum. He'll deal with it for you—looks after all that kind of thing.

*Mrs. Mee.* Mr. Dodds ? Er—oh !—what are his initials ?

*Vanman.* C. I., mum. I know that because it makes C. I. D. Nothing ever escapes him—we call him The Tec, but I shouldn't like him to know. You see he deals with investigations.

*Mrs. Mee.* C . . . I . . . Cyril Ivor . . . I wonder !

### SCENE II

*Mr. Dodds's Office at the New Stores, Ltd. Mr. Dodds seated*

[*Enter typist.*]

*Typist.* A Mrs. Mee to see you, sir.

*Dodds.* Show her in, Miss Type.

[*Enter Mrs. Mee.*]

*Dodds.* Helen !

*Mrs. Mee.* Cyril !

*Dodds.* Well, I'm da—— this is a surprise !

*Mrs. Mee.* It is, rather. Fancy meeting you again after all this time !

*Dodds.* Oh, I knew I was bound to bump into you sooner or later.

*Mrs. Mee.* Very much later. Five years now, or is it six ?

*Dodds.* So long ! And you're Mrs. Mee now.

*Mrs. Mee.* Yes, a loving and dutiful Mrs. Mee, who runs a house

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quite successfully—when New Stores doesn't spoil things. You are married, too, I suppose ?

*Dodds.* No, quite free, permanently cured of heart affection since—

*Mrs. Mee.* Oh yes ! Now what about my complaint, please ?

*Dodds.* Well, if I must, Helen—sorry, Mrs. Mee. But what a position ! Mrs. Mee's Missing Mayonnaise—C. I. D. takes up the trail. Sounds like Edgar Wallace with a love interest thrown in. This calls for *café à deux* in the restaurant, and a chat about old times.

*Mrs. Mee.* No, please, no ! I'm glad to see you again, of course ; but I'm a busy woman nowadays, and I've hundreds of things to do before lunch. What about my complaint ?

*Dodds.* Ah, well ! It's a hard world. [*Rings. Enter Miss Type.*] Send Miss Smith to me, please. [*Exit Miss Type. Enter Miss Smith.*] Now, Miss Smith, here is Mrs. Mee. Donkin, the drayman, received a complaint from this lady which, after investigation, proved to be due to a fault of yours. But you know the facts, I believe ?

*Miss Smith.* Yes, sir.

*Dodds.* You also know that this is the second complaint this week about your work. But this is more serious. Not only have you failed a New Stores customer, which is a serious enough fault, but you have disappointed a great friend of mine. Now, I've given you chances before ; but New Stores can't be let down like this. Report to the cashier—you're fired.

*Miss Smith.* But, sir—

*Mrs. Mee.* Mr. Dodds !

*Dodds.* Now, Mrs. Mee, leave this to me. Let me handle it in my own way ; and as for you, Miss Smith, do as you're told : get your cards at once.

*Mrs. Mee.* Cyril, that's unfair. If I'd thought—

*Dodds.* Helen ! I'm sorry to upset you, but we have to set examples or the business world would be back to where I found it—and pulled it round.

*Mrs. Mee.* But can't you see I'm responsible for the poor girl losing her job. I wish I'd never seen your beastly store.

*Dodds.* But, Helen—

*Mrs. Mee.* Don't talk to me. I'll never come into this place again. You talk about giving the girl a chance—I'll give you one. Re-instate that girl, or I'll never talk to you again, for fifty-five years this time. [*Exit. Dodds brushes back his hair, then chuckles.*]

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### SCENE III

*As in Scene I*

*Vanman.* Good-morning, mum.

*Mrs. Mee.* Good-morning. The things are right for once, I see.

*Vanman.* Very good, mum.

*Mrs. Mee.* Have you any message from Mr. Dodds ?

*Vanman.* Yes, mum, I have, mum. He says as how I was to tell you Miss Smith is back on duty.

*Mrs. Mee.* I'm very glad to hear it. Good for him, too. If there had been any other news you'd never have had another order here.

*Vanman.* Oh, I shouldn't worry about her, mum, if I was you. You see, Miss Smith is our Complaints Lady.

*Mrs. Mee.* Complaints Lady ?

*Vanman.* Yes, mum. If ever there's a dissatisfied customer, Miss Smith is always brought up to the office and sacked. Got her notice three times last week, she did !

[*Curtain, as Mrs. Mee bangs the door after him in a pet, and Vanman whistles softly in amusement.*]

It is a light-hearted trifle, and would please a class of adolescents, whose excess energy, apt to explode in trivial disorder, would find in acting it a patterned and even useful outlet. The value of indirect activities like this is all the greater to-day when the schools have created a taste for them. But there is the difficulty of finding writers. One way is to give a talk on plays. Thus the above piece was written after a lesson in which simple dramatic form was outlined ; for though adults like drama, their unassisted attempts are apt to reveal the haziest notions of construction, dialogue, and character drawing.<sup>1</sup>

The following method may be helpful in teaching the

<sup>1</sup> A fascinating book on dramatic imagination and the art of acting is Constantin Stanislavsky's *An Actor Prepares*. (Geoffrey Bles.)

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essentials of form. Narrate a mere series of incidents ; then ask why it fails to maintain interest. Explain that a plot-pattern which consists solely of a string of unorganic incidents—as in biographical plays—cannot command attention unless the incidents end with exciting “curtains,” and mount step by step to a climax in relation to some central motive. Such is the “chronicle,” or railway-line type of plot.

Now tell in outline the story of a play in which there is a “hero” and a “villain,” with the hero encountering difficulties through the machinations of the villain, who is successful until just before the end, when the hero becomes triumphant. Show how the two threads run counter to each other, and how the conflict leads through suspense to final surprise. Such is the main idea of the “intrigue,” or “spider’s web” type of plot, an easy type to employ for gaining interest, but artificial.

Remind the class that variety is the spice of drama, which demands contrast of character and action. In dialogue, which should tend to the crisp, speakers should sometimes continue along their own line of thought, and not always directly answer their interlocutor’s remark.

To apply the lesson, refer to some play or film recently seen, and analyse it with the class from the angle of dramatic construction. Then outlining a likely theme, tell the class to frame a plot round it, and write a play of its own.

### *8. Defence of Illustration*

This chapter will not win the approval of the hard-headed reader, who will cry, “Out upon this superficial cadging for interest ! Anything to waste time and the

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ratepayers' money ; and to spoil the class till hard slogging is despised. Diverting tricks ! The real teacher sternly faces the endless task of overcoming ignorance and mental laziness ; but little thanks he gets for this ! ”

The everlasting slogging is a necessity ; no doubt of that. But there is little virtue in making the slogging a weariness of the flesh by neglecting legitimate means to clarify facts and make them real to the apprehension. There are too many purely word- and figure-mongers in the academic world.

It is true that even with adults one has to go over a thing again and again to drive it home. But that is no reason why a resourceful teacher should be debarred from using illuminating personal modes for fostering interest and understanding. I have yet to find that the teacher with originality of procedure obtains less satisfactory examination or other “ results ” than the undeviating slogger ; or that lack of imagination is a passport to sound educational method.

## CHAPTER XI.—HELPING THE STUDENTS' MEMORY

### 1. *Learning-Plateaux*

LEARNING the countless details of anatomy is a respectable performance of memory. It takes the average medical student a long time. Moreover, he may learn the whole array of facts only to forget them again forthwith. In fact it has been said that he may learn and forget them seven or eight times over before they become anything like a permanent possession.

There are plenty of people who would not have the confidence to struggle against such odds.

Progress in acquisition of new knowledge is apt to be deceptive. The student anticipates making an equal amount of progress each day; that is, if the subject matter or skill should normally take about a year to learn, he expects each month to show a twelfth of the job done. With some the expectation is realized; with others not. At the end of the first month he may appear to have made hardly any progress; even after three months things may still seem fumbling and hazy. Then, perhaps after a holiday followed by a brief period of even greater hesitation, suddenly the needful co-ordinations are found to have taken place, and he finds he really has done the requisite quarter of the job. The new

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knowledge or skill has become a part of himself. At this welcome realization of advance he redoubles his efforts ; with similar disappointing then heartening results. After the second apparent miracle he gathers that learning is apt to give the feeling of advancing by "plateaux." Each plateau may be discouraging, but surely, inevitably, he will one day climb up to the next.

It is often well to tell the discouraged student about this peculiarity of mental development, so that he may realize how the "learning" process is all the while quietly going on, co-ordinating the new acquisitions in readiness for a firm, unified advance.

The "learning process" generally is a mysterious affair, and the student might profit by further knowledge of it.

### *2. Imagery Types*

To see the clock by the bedside in the morning, to hear it ticking, to smell the odour of bread as we pass the baker's door, to press down the pedals of a bicycle to obtain propulsion along the street—these experiences seem "real." As we lie snug in bed at night we can turn over the day's experience in thought and recapture in some degree all these sensations : but there is now a certain unreality in them—we can recapture only memories, faded images of the original experiences, what Burt calls "resurrected ghosts of past sensations."

The vividness of these ghosts varies with different people, as does the kind of sensation best remembered. Some people will best recall the clock face, others the sound of the ticking, others the smell of the baking, and still others the muscular movement of the legs. The

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differences of degree may be small, but they exist. They can be detected from questioning, even without the tests outlined earlier in this book. "When you close your eyes," we could say to a person under test, "and try to recall what happened before you left home this morning, which impressions stand out the strongest? Do you see the whole collection of breakfast things laid out on the table? Can you still see your father's face? Or do you hear his voice as he discusses the morning's news? Can you recover the taste of the bacon? Or its smell? Or do you recall all these things only vaguely until you have seemed to say over to yourself in words the names and qualities of the items?" The answers would give some indication of the subject's memory type.

Or, addressing some one who has just received a letter from a friend, we could ask, "As you read the letter, do you speak the phrases silently over to yourself? Or do you seem to hear your friend's voice speaking the words? When you put the letter out of sight can you see it plainly still in your mind's eye, all spaced out as it really is? If you wished to memorize parts of the letter would you say them out aloud, or write them down?"

The following list of memory types affords a clue to the above tests (though of course every one is to some extent mixed in type).

### MEMORY TYPES

#### *Thing Thinkers (Concrete).*

1. Eye images (Visualizers).
2. Ear images (Audiles).
3. Muscular images (Motiles).

#### *Word Thinkers (Verbals).*

- Eye images (Visualizers with locational tendency).  
Ear images (Audiles).  
Muscular images (Motiles)—(a) speaking, (b) writing.

## HELPING THE STUDENTS' MEMORY

### 3. *Association and Memory*

Since memory depends thus on various and mixed types of imagery, it is not a "faculty" as used to be thought, but a series of separate (though associated) "memories." One can have a good memory for faces and a bad one for words, a bad one for figures and a good one for facts. Training will usually strengthen any one of these memories while only slightly improving the others. As teachers, we have to bear in mind the types of memory required for learning the subject we teach, and then to give some training in developing them.

Memory is assisted by association, the interlinking of mental images. If Mrs. Hogg orders a pound of bacon, the errand boy will tend specially to remember the order. Or if Mrs. Bacon orders a pound of sugar, the opposite-ness of the ideas will prompt his memory. If Mrs. Whole orders half a ton of coal, recollection will be easier still, because to the relation of "whole" and "half" is added the rhyming relation of "whole" and "coal." Or if the boy has lively memories of once being slightly poisoned by eating tinned salmon on a hot day, he will catch strongly at Mrs. Close's order for "Two tins of John West, please."

Accident has provided our hypothetical errand boy with these associative links; but a super errand boy would furnish links of his own and gain the reputation of having the best errand-boy memory in the town. If Mrs. Johnson orders three pounds of butter, he will say, "Mrs. Johnson's a hard nut, like those old freebooters we were told about at school. Mrs. Johnson—free-

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booter—three butter.” This very remarkable errand boy would not need to pay a considerable sum of money for memory training by post. Teacher and student should take a leaf out of his book.

It has been claimed that the quality of a man's mind may be gauged from his richness and readiness in association-forming. Certainly, associational and not logical connection is the basis of mental habits.

### 4. *Mechanical Memorizing*

Professor Cyril Burt tells how one of his colleagues habitually jots down his lecture-notes on the back of a foolscap envelope, which he nearly always mislays. Arrived in the lecture room he looks up at the ceiling, and clearly sees there all his headings written out in their proper order and with the original lay-out. His strong visual memory is locational : a complete, orderly picture comes up. A genius of this type is said to have memorized quite casually the whole of Bradshaw—names, times, and footnotes ! People who know most of the Bible by heart can usually see the pages, verse numbers, and all.

A sort of positional association is established by the initial letters of words. Which of us has not learnt the order of Marlborough's “ famous victories ” by the mystic mnemonic B R O M, standing for Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenarde, and Malplaquet ? Should we teach a commercial class that the Chief Buying Motives are Comfort, Prestige, Economy, Convenience, Security—tiresome abstractions—we could hint how to memorize the list from the initials C P E C S, which, rearranged

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as S P E C C, forms an important syllable in the customer's inSPEction of the goods in the shop window—when he is being influenced by S P E C C, viz. Security, etc. . . . Futile as this kind of thing sounds, it is useful enough on occasion for the learning of mechanical facts that constantly elude straight memorization.

Another absurd-seeming association system is that sometimes employed by actors with a poor memory for words. It is to picture the word-syllables. The words given, the problem is to invent the pictures. The effort required to do this, the muscular movements involved in drawing the little sketches, the location on the page, the frequent comicality, and the association of word with picture, all contribute their meed towards making the learning easier and the retention longer. The necessary length of time taken up, too, helps, time being an important factor in memorizing. Suppose the opening of a speech to be learnt is, "I am a spirit," after the cue word "Hail!" The actor concocts the following representation of them: sketch of descending hail; an eye; a ham, with struck-out "h" written beside it; a haystack with ditto; a bottle labelled "Whisky." The whole is ridiculous but readily memorized.

Indeed nearly all mnemonic aids are absurd. "Thirty days hath September" is doggerel, but it helps. Catchiness, lilt, and the words stay. Echoing vowels and consonants ("apt alliteration's artful aid") serve to point up the music.

Adults tend to complain that they "have no memory." It is useful, therefore, for the tutor to be memory-conscious, so that he may be able to lend guidance where difficulties arise. The teacher should recommend his students to use all available memory-fields, and to plan

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their campaign of learning rather than plunge blindly and wastefully forward through ignorance of the right procedure. The student's attitude should not be, "How can I ever learn all that?" but "Why, with management I could learn twice the amount." Then he should deliberately shut off every distraction, concentrate steadily, and methodically set to work.

### 5. *Logical Memory*

While the laws of association are important, there are many people who tend to remember by means of logical connection, who have, as it were, "causal" minds. They may be poor at picking up collections of nonsense syllables, or forming chains of half-conscious associations, but they are quick at remembering arguments, inter-relationships, categories. They are apt to learn best from a teacher who is philosophic, who expounds the principles underlying processes, machinery, rules, who traces out methodically all the steps in the working of examples, and shows how behind the façade of multiple and complex appearances there is a single basic truth. Logical thinkers help themselves to learn by asking questions about the matters to be studied, thinking out lists of similars and opposites, analysing origins and qualities; in short by inquiring into the essence and definition of ideas. The rational memorizer—and all of us are that in some degree—hates things to hang about loosely. Association can be largely irrational, apparently accidental, as in dreams and slips of the tongue; but the most valuable associations are those that are logical, and therefore objectively "real."

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### 6. *Some Rules for Memorizing*

Nature does not wear her heart on her sleeve. Thus little men often have more character than big men, silent men a greater air of wisdom than talkers, and the longest way round often proves the shortest way home. Similarly the way to learn a page of prose or verse by heart would seem to be first to memorize the opening, then to master the next short section, and so on until the page is known as a whole. But experiment has shown that the quicker method is to learn the page as a whole, by repeated whole readings and trials; getting the general run of it, taking in a phrase here and a phrase there in its setting, and seeing the text come out imperceptibly from the faint to the clear like a photographic negative developing in a tank.

The rule is, then, that learning by wholes is generally quicker than learning by parts, and leads to more lasting retention.

Experiment also shows that forgetting goes on most actively immediately after learning has taken place, and then gradually slows down. A good rule is, then, to revise at once after learning, and if possible again within twenty-four hours.

Effective memorizing depends partly on the energy expended in making contact with the material to be learnt. A useful rule, therefore, is to turn the material actively over in the mind by reproducing it in fresh words, or by constant mechanical repetition.

William James declared that the average man develops less than ten per cent. of his potential mental capacity. Psycho-analysis reveals that one tends to forget facts

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coloured with a disagreeable emotion (e.g. the telephone number of an objectionable acquaintance). The student should not, therefore, take a dismal view of his possibilities ; but make a confident effort to learn, while striving all the time to *like* the subject being learnt.

It is wise not to be dogmatic in laying down rules for students in regard to their posture and behaviour while "swotting." Smith may say he learns best when lying down, Jones when perambulating the room, Brown while sitting in a lounge chair, M'Kie while sitting stiffly up to a high desk, M'Intee while smoking a pipe, Tomkyns while listening to music on the radio. And why not ? If the posture or sub-conscious activity suggests the right mood, it probably assists memorizing. The only question to be answered is : does the result confirm this ? That must strictly be reckoned with ; as one is apt to be self-indulgent, and to prefer a good time to steeling oneself to get on with the job in hand. One way or another, concentration must be the goal.

### 7. *Discovering a Personal Method*

The adult student does well, then, to make some inquiry into his own best ways of studying and memorizing. Nor is this necessarily a weariness of the flesh, as the following note from a student shows. "I can still vividly recapture the emotion of my discovery. It was a trifling one, and really an open secret ; yet I felt it was my own. It happened during preparation for Intermediate Arts Latin. The wretched Latin words would not stick. By memory type I was Verbal-Audile-Motile (Speaking), but repeated sayings 'aloud-silently' of

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the words failed to induce retention of them. I was quite beaten by '*palus-paludis*—a marsh,' for example. Just then, though unused to visualizing, I saw clearly the image of a dark, marshy place, with feathery and pod-like reeds waving above it, and I heard the hollow croak of frogs. (*Palus-paludis* has remained a vivid memory to this day.) At once the memory-law seemed to present itself to me : viz. one should try, while repeating the Latin words over and over, to form deliberate mental pictures of the English meanings. I went over a column of new words like that, and learnt them with astonishing rapidity. Full of the discovery I told it to others, who merely replied, 'Oh, anybody knows that : it comes naturally.' But it had not previously come to me ; and I found one or two others who were glad to know of it. Of these, one found the same miraculous virtue as myself, and told the lecturer, who amusedly commented, 'Well, it's good to make discoveries for oneself, of course ; but unwise to spread them abroad. Other fellows either couldn't learn that way, or would do so off their own bat. People have learnt languages like that ever since the Tower of Babel.'

"And I never told the 'secret' again . . . till now."

## CHAPTER XII.—INTELLIGENCE RANGE AND GROUP WORKING

### 1. *Individual Differences of Intelligence*

KNOWLEDGE of the nature of intelligence advances, but applications of this knowledge to educational practice are rare. There are, of course, Pass and Honour Schools in the universities. Also in the primary and post-primary schools group systems of working are no longer uncommon. But in evening classes and courses of the W.E.A. type, students are generally lumped indiscriminately together for instruction. The consequent waste is due not only to the differences of intelligence thus ignored, but to the insistence on one *tempo* for students of naturally different speeds of working.

The problem of *tempo* is a very real one ; and only a system of group-working offers any solution of it—that is, if there is to be any general class-teaching at all. With groups working at assignments designed specifically for each, the machinery of class work can operate with little friction and delay.

But the selection and organization of groups depends on the possession of some means for measuring relative intelligence. So the question of intelligence-grading calls for consideration.

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### 2. *Intelligence : Spearman's Hypothesis*

What is the nature of intelligence? The answer is not definitely known. Intelligence appears to comprise certain general mental powers, as a nucleus round which cluster a number of special powers. The general powers (called *g*) include elements of memory, adaptability to fresh knowledge and circumstances, and reasoning: these form the basis of an individual's capacity as a whole. Related to *g* are a number of special powers (called *s*), each more or less dependent on *g*: musical ability, artistic, linguistic, and the like. Some of the conclusions of observers working on this widely accepted theory (called Spearman's Two-Factor Hypothesis) are as follows:<sup>1</sup>

<i>Special Power.</i>		<i>g.</i>	
Success in	mathematics depends 9 times as much on <i>g</i> as on <i>s</i> .		
"	classics " 9.5 " " <i>g</i> " <i>s</i> .		
"	logic " 4 " " <i>g</i> " <i>s</i> .		
"	music " 3 " " <i>g</i> " <i>s</i> .		
"	drawing " $\frac{1}{4}$ " " <i>g</i> " <i>s</i> .		

In the above list, except in respect of drawing, success depends much more on general intelligence than on specific gift. Therefore in setting about the task of forming groups at the beginning of a session, we may largely ignore special gifts and concentrate on general intelligence. For testing this it is clear that the first three subjects on the list would make good measures, viz. mathematics, classics, and logic; and for these may

<sup>1</sup> For another analysis see W. P. Alexander's *Intelligence, Concrete and Abstract* (Cambridge Press), in which *persistence* is a factor.

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be substituted, for practical purposes, arithmetic, English and problem work.

### 3. *Range of Intelligence*

Here there arises the question of standards, and how and to what age in life intelligence usually develops.

It is now known that, like weight and height, intelligence develops fairly uniformly from birth. But the development ceases at about the age of fifteen-sixteen. There is, therefore, a measurable standard to which an average child should approximate at any given age ; and this standard has been found by averaging the results of innumerable "intelligence tests" <sup>1</sup> carried out on children at every stage of development. If a child of ten can pass the normal test for a child of ten, he himself is normal : he has, in technical jargon, an Intelligence Quotient (or I.Q.) of 100. If he can pass only the test for a child of eight, his

$$\text{I.Q.} = \frac{8}{10} \times 100 = 80.$$

If he can pass the test for a child of twelve, his

$$\text{I.Q.} = \frac{12}{10} \times 100 = 120.$$

At each stage different children show a wide range of "mental ages." Thus in a mixed group of children of age ten, individuals may range in mental age from five

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter II. of R. B. Cattell's *Your Mind and Mine*. (Harrap.)

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(I.Q. 50) to fifteen (I.Q. 150). In relation to choice of career, persons of I.Q. 150 and over hold most of the high professional and administrative positions ; of I.Q. 100-115 skilled posts and minor commercial positions ; of I.Q. 50-70 casual labour jobs. Persons under I.Q. 50 are unable to take proper care of themselves, and are kept under supervision or in mental defective institutions.

Statistically, innate intelligence in any unspecialized large group ranges evenly from low to high, and is almost independent of social status or geographical distribution. The adult teacher will have to deal, therefore, with a wide range of intelligence, and with potentialities which are already fixed for life. If his class consists of a hundred students on a perfect average of the whole country, he has ten "backward" students, ten brilliant, and eighty evenly spaced out between. If his class is casual, he has a range of students from probably I.Q. 80 to I.Q. 130. In these circumstances, the wastage occurring as a result of indiscriminate lumping together is apparent ; whereas if the teacher forms three class groups round I.Q.'s 85, 100, and 120, giving each its own grade and quantity of work to do, reasonable justice may be done to all.

The question is what tests to administer, and how to administer them.

### *4. Intelligence Tests*

Intelligence tests do not examine a particular subject or special syllabus of work, but are as nearly as can be independent of preparation on the students' part. They can therefore be used to test a class of unassorted

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students whose past histories are without common features.

There is not space in this book to enter into detail about tests and testing ; but a full account will be found in Dr. Cattell's *A Guide to Mental Testing for Psychological Clinics, Schools, and Industrial Psychologists* (University of London Press). The tests are carried out from standard printed forms procurable in quantity from various publishers. Every item is timed, and a standard method of scoring is prescribed.

The following are a few items occurring in a typical test :

Given a page of jumbled-up capital letters : in two minutes to cross out as many stated letters as possible (e.g. A, R, S, T).

Given a list of names of animals, each with spelling jumbled (e.g. " erba " for " bear ") : in two minutes to write down the right name for as many as possible.

Given a number of easy sums each with an admitted mistake in the working : in two minutes to correct them.

Given a list of mis-spelt words : in two minutes to write them out correctly.

Given a list of words expressing qualities : also for each a group of four words nearly expressing their opposites : in two minutes to underline in each instance the truest opposite.

Given a puzzling statement, containing a hidden illogicality : in two minutes to state where the fallacy lies.

Given a list of proverbs in column form : also a list in column form of their meanings : the latter are jumbled up : in four minutes to mark the appropriate meaning for each proverb.

Such is the kind of question included in " intelligence testing." Suppose the teacher makes such a test, and from the results divides his class into three graded groups according to general capacity : what then ?

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### *5. Group Working in an Evening Class*

A young book-keeping teacher complained that much of his teaching was ineffective because it suited only part of the class at a time. Adopting the tutor's suggestion, he tried out a system of group-working, and a year later presented the following report :

"I have now had five years' teaching experience in a Co-operative Evening School, in each year of which I have been puzzled as to how to deal with the backward, the brilliant, and the irresponsible student. Finally, I decided to try a group system. After a year's working, I believe I have gone a long way towards solving the problem, and I hope to extend the system further next session.

"My subject is Introduction to Book-keeping. In the main it covers Journalizing, Posting to Ledger Account, Receipts and Payments, Income and Expenditure, Assets and Liabilities, Classes of Ledger Accounts.

"At the beginning of the session I had twenty-six students, who occupied separate desks in the classroom, the same seat being occupied each week by the same student, transfer being permissible only after consultation with me. The girls (three in number) were placed at the end of the classroom. As much time is lost at first through new enrolments, registration, distribution of textbooks and exercise books, and the like, I was about a month in settling down to solid work. But I gave homework each week, the answers providing me with information I required in order to classify the students in the group. I organized three groups :

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Group 1 consisted of 6 students (4 men, 2 women).

Group 2 consisted of 10 students (9 men, 1 woman).

Group 3 consisted of 10 students.

"To begin each class night, all students worked at a set question on the blackboard, e.g. in journalizing a number of transactions. By the time all late-comers had arrived, and the register was finally closed for the first hour, Group 1 had finished. Not to keep them idle, I gave them a second question, dealing with the new matter for the night, until Groups 2 and 3 were ready.

"I then announced the aim of the lesson to all the students, and with the preparation this took from ten to fifteen minutes. Group 1 carried on with the question I had given them, while I lectured on the new matter to Groups 2 and 3. After that, Group 2 tackled the same question, while I worked out the answer on the blackboard with Group 3—not the whole answer, but about half, leaving the rest for the group to finish. When all were working, I turned my attention to Group 1, which asked freely for help when it was needed. On some occasions the second exercise was not a problem to work out, but an instruction to read a new chapter in the class textbook; this Group 1 would do on its own. But the new matter I *taught* to the other two groups as a lecture, after which they tackled an example to be worked out (alongside Group 1), Group 3 requiring careful coaching in the initial steps. The examples were long ones, and their working out completed the evening's work. (Of course the groups were not rigid: 2 and 3 might vary in size according to the work undertaken, and sometimes they worked together for a whole period. If a few improved when doing certain parts of the textbook, I separated them again, and gave them Group 1 work,

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while I attended to the others individually or in a group.)

"I made a careful note of progress within each group for the night ; so that I knew just where I stood for the following week. Whatever Group 1 did eventually came to be done also by Group 3, but Group 3 was always last, and needed more formal instruction.

"After Christmas my attendance (as happens then) fell ; the new average was sixteen, the ten students who no longer came were (with a single exception) those of Group 3. Not a single Group 1 student fell out, though I had obviously done less personal work with Group 1 than with the others. I reorganized the class, keeping Group 1 intact with its six students, and breaking Group 2 into a fresh Group 2 of six students, and a fresh Group 3 of four. The average level was now higher, but I carried on as before.

"At the end of the session, Groups 2 and 3 had completed the official course. Group 1 had also covered about one-third of the Second Year Course. Group 1 had not got stale, and Groups 2 and 3 had not been hustled. All had been able to advance at their natural pace. My conclusion is that the Group system is workable with a small or medium class, though there might be difficulties of discipline and organization in a class of forty or more. Group working is economical of the students' time, and ensures better individual attention. I think that some means could be devised to make it workable and helpful for talking subjects (e.g. History, Literature) as well as for mathematical subjects."

The experience of this evening school teacher gives some indication as to how the problem of handling a class

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of mixed ability may be faced by a man who thinks for himself and is prepared to experiment. But sometimes special conditions make a solution less easy. The following report from another teacher illustrates this difficulty :

“ I teach Bakery. I have an average attendance of twenty students, whose ages range from 14 to 22. About a quarter have attended this Bakery Class for five years, and naturally want some fresh work to induce them to continue. (I call this the Third Year, for convenience.) The Second Year men (about three-eighths of the class) have done the groundwork, made some simple mixings, and aim at doing a little higher work than the First Year (also three-eighths of the class), who know nothing of the trade and must start at the beginning.

“ My difficulty is that individual attention is necessary to have presentable goods turned out, on account of the endless detail in manufacture. I begin the lesson by describing the particular process and writing notes on the blackboard ; but there is always some little point which some one has not grasped, and which makes all the difference to the finished goods when disregarded. The handling of goods needs very great care, *e.g.* in cake-making a slight over- or under-mixing will ruin the cake, make it tough and heavy. This may be pointed out beforehand in demonstration work, but when a boy has a mixing of his own, especially if it is his first, he needs assistance and confidence to overcome his inevitable nervous apprehension of doing something wrong.

“ Whilst this assistance is being given to the Second Year, what of the First Year men whose dough is ready for moulding into loaves, and the Third Year men who have

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cut out their shapes for fancy cakes and are waiting for some advice on decoration? It may be suggested that the Third Year men should help the First Year with their bread; but would they have the satisfaction of learning something more, and so gain by coming to the class? Their time is limited, and by helping the beginners they may lose the opportunity of finishing their fancy cake; which, of course, cannot be continued the next week."

Here is a real opening for experiment in group organization, for which the following are some suggestions:

The Third Year *must* help the others: say, the First Year while the teacher helps the Second.

A rota could be arranged: say, one Third Year man each week to give all his time to the First Year. He would enjoy the responsibility, lose only a few evenings in the session, and learn something himself in criticising the others.

The teacher should arrange a careful Cautionary List to anticipate and reduce some of the common forms of mistake.

The disposition of the time within the  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours class period should be determined beforehand on a system involving the minimum wastage through the teacher's attention being required by the Second and Third Year at the same time. Thus the Third Year might start promptly on new work, while the Second spend half an hour writing notes and copying recipes.

If the evening class teacher is willing to plan group-work along lines suited to his personal problem, he will inevitably improve class efficiency.

### 6. Group Assignments

In working a group system, the teacher must give close attention to the preparation before the lesson of

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appropriate assignments of work for each group. It is seldom sufficient only to set direct questions. Individual occupation should also be furnished by allocations of book-sections to read and summarize, diagrams and maps to draw, statistics to analyse, and the like. As Shaw says, with a modicum of truth, "If you teach a man anything, he will never learn."

### *7. Group Working and the Lecture System*

Has group-work any scope in W.E.A. and other classes of a lecture type? Possibly, during the questions and discussion hour, which may be run on the lines of a subdivided Discussion Group (as described in Chapter III.). This procedure is most applicable to a very large class; but even one of only twenty-four members might on occasion find it practicable. The difficulty lies in how to decide the composition of the small groups in which, of course, grading by intelligence would be out of place. Each group will need two or more active speakers and critics, and some balance of opinion. But groups will tend sometimes to be dominated by a single strong personality, or to resent the attempted dominance of an unpopular member. The teacher must exercise his tact to avoid awkward complications, and when necessary snub the offenders, or arrange an arbitrary method of group selection by picking out names from a hat. In certain subjects there might be groups graded (not explicitly, of course) as ordinary and advanced, so that the abler members can proceed at their own pace; subjects like economics, psychology, and international affairs occur to mind.

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Other schemes to increase the efficiency of a two hours' meeting depend on a redistribution of the time upon a Lecture and Tutorial basis. The commonest scheme is for the first hour to be used for a general lecture, while the second is reserved for tutorial work with the more advanced (the remainder being either free or directed to carry out reading and investigation privately). But many other arrangements are possible, on the basis of a lecture hour and a planned working hour.

The essential thing is that the adult teacher should ask himself whether his class is gaining maximum benefit from the single unit system of organization. If it is (as usually, for example, in the first year), all is well ; but if the teacher has doubts, he should experiment on fresh allocations of time and modes of working with a view to catering in a realistic way for the many varieties of ability and temperament with which he is concerned. There is to-day still too much blind uniformity in two-hour lecture classes irrespective of class and subject needs. Flexibility of Board of Education requirements would surely follow any replanning of the two hours' period that was visibly to the advantage of the class as a learning machine.

## CHAPTER XIII.—QUESTIONS, WRITTEN WORK, AND TESTING

### *1. The Technique of Questioning*

ORAL questioning is a formidable enemy of vagueness. It involves breaking up complex wholes into simple units, clearing up the limits of existing knowledge, enlisting the co-operative effort of the class in preparing the ground for new acquisitions, and stretching mental grasp. But it is not a simple art. The good questioner must possess considerable skill and a ready mind.

The greatest fault of most adult teachers in their questioning consists in a failure to express themselves in the simplest and briefest form. "What is the importance," asked one teacher, "of a preponderance of exports compared with imports relative to the national commercial credit?" The expression is ponderous, and obscures the meaning. He could have said, "What advantage to national credit comes from having more exports than imports?"

Another common fault is to ask general questions when particular ones would be more effective. "What is a sonnet?" really demands a complex answer, because a sonnet is not merely a poem of fourteen lines length. A number of detailed and direct queries would be better, leading to short answers that would gradually build up the complete definition.

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It is best to address a question to the class as a whole before singling out an individual to respond, because then every one has a chance to consider his own answer, without being short-circuited by hearing another's. If it happens once in a way that a general or 'Yes-or-No' question is called for, a cautionary motivation should precede the completion of the question. Thus one should not say, "Who knows what that part of the machine is for?" but rather, "I am going to point to a certain part of the machine: when I do so, all who know what its function is please show by raising a hand." By the second form of question the teacher enlists the aid of suspense and surprise: he holds the attention, and receives a definite, smartened-up response. There is dramatic emphasis.

The question should always be spoken with assurance, as if to say, "Of course you are able to answer," yet in a sufficiently detached tone not to give a hint of the answer. Should the question be repeated (a practice generally to avoid), it should be worded exactly as before. Any change of wording tends to be regarded by the duller students as evidence of a change of question, and is confusing.

It is a moot point how in any particular class the members should show their readiness to answer. The shooting up of hands is too reminiscent of schooldays to be agreeable to adults, and is cumbersome. In a small class, indication by eye or by a nod of the head is enough. In a large class, a motion of the hand serves, with no loss of dignity—bidders at Christie's might use the same sign, or even the British Cabinet at a meeting critical in history.

Then there arises the problem of timing answers. How

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long an interval should elapse between the asking of the question and the acceptance of the first answer? The great rule is: One should not be too quick. There is an old saying, "Teachers abhor a silence." The teacher is apt to hurry because he knows the answer already, tends to have in mind only the top 10 per cent. of the class, and keeps worrying about completing the class-work in time. But he must resist the temptation to plunge at the first answer indicated. He might well, if other things fail, habitually count twenty before accepting the first answer, or measure out a rough fourteen seconds (which observation shows to be a good average time). But much depends on the type and purpose of the question.

It is wise to address the answerer by his name (adults dislike being regarded as undifferentiated units), to give him an uninterrupted hearing however slow he is, not to repeat his answer after him, and, if he is unable to answer promptly, not to give him a second chance, but at once pass on to a fresh student. Each answer should be swiftly assessed mentally, for either passing over as irrelevant, or accepting, or rejecting, or partially rejecting with expansion to help class and student to understand where it has missed the mark. This handling of answers can be serviceable to the class even when many of the answers are incorrect.

Finally, adult students should be regarded as welcome at all times to ask questions of the teacher. Trivialities and side-tracking should be tactfully put in their place; but otherwise every student should be allowed to express his views even if they run contrary to the teacher's. Questioners should not be crushed by sarcasm or by portentous documentation with chapter and verse. If unable to answer a student's question, the teacher should

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not bluff or look ashamed, but frankly admit ignorance, or set himself or the class to look up the answer, or dismiss the question as trivial (if it is so).

And of course the teacher should try to avoid accepting the bulk of answers from two or three of the students only, or letting two or three students monopolize the questions put to himself. Any class will work the better for a fair distribution of attention and demand.

Like other special modes in teaching, questioning should not be overdone, especially with adults. A mode rivalling it in value is that of oral summarizing, which gives continuous expression to ideas, on a broad basis. With practice, the oral summary becomes a fluent, rounded-off statement, first cousin of the written answer.

### *2. The Essay and its Alternatives*

Written work may be set for practice or for testing. For both purposes, in respect to non-mathematical and non-practical subjects, the generally favoured form is the "essay."

Unfortunately, except with fluent and resourceful writers, the formal essay produces a cramping effect. To read a hundred essays on the same subject by a hundred different adult students is to become convinced of the truth of this statement. The hundred authors simply are not there; rather a hundred ghosts speaking over long-distance telephones. So unless his class be experienced and selective on an advanced basis, the teacher is well advised not to restrict written work to the "essay." There will then be the less padding and cant. But suppose an essay is the exercise the tutor sets. Here

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is a man student who could write a single paragraph of pith and sense ; but it is an essay he must do—so he fills out with vague generalities and worthless clichés. Or there is a woman student who could make effective notes of her arguments for or against a given policy ; but it is an essay she must write—and she wanders continually from the point. Others could produce useful diagrams, graphs, tabulated statistics ; they must write an essay, and they produce a vague and stilted mass of words.

For to the uninitiated the “ essay ” is an overwhelming thing, a large-scale structure requiring a large-scale plan and style. It is like a gigantic suit of armour, which mere man dare not put on.

Instead of an essay, some definite job should be set—to answer certain questions briefly, pointedly, perhaps in a single paragraph or in note form ; or to collect particulars, or work examples, or draw graphs, or make illustrative or statistical diagrams.

In setting questions it is usually policy to offer a number of alternatives ; as the test should be not only on what is known of the topic but on how much intelligence can be applied to some aspect or other of it. A few students flourish on abstract questions, but most respond better to the concrete and particular, which should heavily preponderate.

A simple form of exercise is the reproduction in some form of material supplied by lecture or private reading. This may be extended to a summary of oral answers heard in class, and of discussions ; and later still to the stating of a case, the marshalling of an argument, the judging and noting of origins, causes, effects. For any of these a paragraph, a few heads and sub-heads, or a

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diagrammatic representation may be enough. Fluency and expansion may be left to time.

A further stage is reached with the definition and illustration of terms, the explanation of given generalizations, the tackling of problems requiring some elementary research. Those students who reach this stage will find no difficulty in coping with any reasonable question.

In literature classes the possible scope is wider. A beginning can be made with personal letters to the tutor or to other members of the class, followed by dialogues (say between a miner gardening on a "play day" and an idle passer-by). To some students verse of the short epigram or the "John Gilpin" type comes readily. The character sketch from observation or from history suits many students; still others the personal essay. An odd one is able to attempt the short story and the one-act play. One way and another there need be no lack of variety for the literary student, in original work of the above types or in direct criticism and assessment.

In any kind of class, a good exercise is for each student to write up a "log" in turn in the class log-book: either a lecture summary, or a discussion of some matter raised in class time, or some variant of these. The reading aloud at the subsequent meeting helps both the writer and the listeners, and gives rise to practical criticism.

### *3. Assessment*

As for marking written work, to be too rigid and severe is to repress the student: to be too lenient is to lose his respect. Proportion in comment comes with

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experience, and should err slightly on the side of encouragement.

A serviceable plan is to diagnose the piece of work under three heads : first, the leading quality (*e.g.* common sense, logic, imagination) ; second, the leading fault (*e.g.* want of plan, loose style, irrelevance) ; third, the improvement to aim at (*e.g.* more concrete examples, more exact use of words, clearer order). But just to mark Good, Weak, Interesting, and to underline every minor error, is to be at once too vague and too inquisitorial to render real help.

As for these minor faults, it is helpful to concentrate on one at a time, by injunction before setting an exercise and by criticism afterwards. A welter of minor corrections leaves the student more confused than enlightened. Technical errors, such as those in punctuation, spelling, and grammar, should be recognized as subordinate, and indicated by an agreed system of signs (*e.g.* Sp for Spelling, Gr for Grammar).

Some tutors, regarding adults as insulted by a numerical mark, make none on practice work. Others obviate indignity by marking on a lettered basis, A+, A, A—, B+, B, B—, etc. ; or further disguise the assessment with Greek letters from alpha to gamma. It is largely a question of taste. Nevertheless most students appreciate an obvious and exact assessment mark provided there is no competitive spirit associated with it. Vague remarks like "Very nice work this week" give no indication of standards, and express a pusillanimous judgment on the part of the tutor who makes them. Mark values should be clearly explained to the class beforehand, and related to some ultimate—like examination pass and credit marks, or some practicable ideal.

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Then, too, in a numerical assessment a fixed part may be earmarked for some special grace—lay-out, illustration, diagrams, accuracy, etc.—to encourage care in subordinate details.

In respect of all written work the golden rule is : Return work promptly, and clearly marked. A month after handing in, the work interests no one, not even the writer of it ; and untidily and illegibly marked work fails to acquaint the student with his shortcomings effectively.

### *4. Advice to Students on Written Answers*

In connection with the continuous written answer, the tutor must keep constantly reminding the student not to write as much as possible in the given time—which is the natural temptation—but a limited quantity much more carefully. “Plan in relation to time available ; cut out and keep down rather than risk the least degree of hurry, disorder, or padding : an ounce of order is worth a ton of bulk.” This is needed advice, for women even more than for men ; thus examination candidates often fail to realize that the whole is greater than the part, and that additional facts tagged on spoil the symmetry of the answer. They too often close their answers with the remark, “Unfinished ; not enough time,” instead of planning originally for the time allowed.

Secondly, with regard to the essay plan, it should be insisted on that the simplest form is the best—generally a direct introduction declaring the point and scope of the answer, the main body of argument under three related heads, and a definite conclusion bringing out what has been demonstrated. Students should be encouraged to

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learn how many pages they actually write per hour, and to limit the scope of their work accordingly. One might add the injunction, "Take care of the planning, and the words will take care of themselves—if you always avoid that bane of English, the long involved sentence."

### 5. *The New-Type Objective Test*

For revision and examination there is a future for the American mechanical test of a one-word answer type. This has the advantage of providing a rapid scrutiny of a wide range of exact facts, besides supplying an objective mark independent of the teacher's taste in English, or any other temperamental factor.<sup>1</sup>

There are a score or more of recognized types of test, of which the most frequently used are four :

- (a) Simple Recall, *e.g.* What is the chief part of a linotype machine ?
- (b) Free Completion, *e.g.* The author of *Kipps* is — ?
- (c) Limited Option, *e.g.* Five possible answers are given : place on the score sheet the number of the right one. The Prime Minister of Great Britain is (1938) (1) Lloyd George, (2) Anthony Eden, (3) Neville Chamberlain, (4) Winston Churchill, (5) Hore-Belisha.
- (d) True-False, *e.g.* A semicolon marks a shorter pause than a comma. True. False. (Strike out "True" or "False.")

The advantage of the Limited Option and True-False types is that memorizing is reduced to a minimum ; to the relief of weaker students, and without detriment

<sup>1</sup> The whole problem is dealt with in Dr. P. F. Ballard's *The New Examiner*. (Hodder and Stoughton.)

## QUESTIONS, WRITTEN WORK, AND TESTING

to the stronger, who must spend a moment examining and rejecting false options, and forming corroborative associations. The drawback of all such tests, namely the time and ingenuity required to prepare them, is balanced by the speed of marking. Only a series of numbers or single words has to be checked, and the total of wrong answers subtracted from the number of questions asked (usually a hundred). If the test is conducted on cyclostyled sheets, students can afterwards go over the answers so as to carry out a complete revision of the ground covered.

Adult students tend to enjoy such tests—otherwise newspapers would not offer them as a means of week-end recreation. The enterprising and thorough teacher will therefore put mechanical tests on his list of special modes to try out on a suitable occasion.

## CHAPTER XIV.—HANDLING THE CLASS

### 1. *Adaptation to the Class*

IF by art or nature the teacher can see himself from the students' point of view, so that his attitude and theirs have a common ground of reference, management of an evening or adult class will normally be easy. The class will feel that they "belong," because the teacher understands them. The timid fellow will expand in the air of security, the audacious hesitate to rag in an atmosphere of friendly respect. Like a good host the tutor gets the best from his class not by a jollificating "Let's all be one happy family together," but by his tone and look.

If at first the tutor feels he has failed to make contact, and has given the impression of being out of touch with his class—perhaps through a too academic manner, or too precise preparation—he must try deliberately to look as though he were succeeding, and adapt himself afresh to the class until he does succeed.

Protracted difficulties are mostly due to complete lack of adaptability on the tutor's part.

### 2. *An Evening's Procedure*

An enemy of good handling of classes is fatigue, which reduces resilience and drive, and deadens rhythm. The

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effect of this is specially marked in evening work, where the class, too, is apt to be tired. It is generally beneficial to split the day's activities in two by resting or relaxing in the afternoon. But every teacher must discover his own method of maintaining freshness.

Rested as far as opportunity allows, the tutor goes to the class meeting-place, his spirit detached and debonair—thinking as little as possible about the work lying ahead. On arrival, he greets early-comers with personal interest, lays out his materials for the class, and makes sure that the room is comfortable and well lit, and that the seating is right for the greatest ease of seeing and hearing—a seemingly small thing that has an important bearing on class efficiency. He starts class-work—not necessarily his lecture—"on the dot," because promptitude inspires confidence, and gives no rope to late-comers. In the first three minutes he sets the pace for the whole meeting, seizing the opportunity to make a strong impression—of activity, good humour, and purposiveness. His tone of voice is quietly positive, to suggest the right working mood and induce willing class co-operation. When the end of the first section of the work is to be indicated, he takes care that the matter under consideration is neatly rounded off with the effect of a good "curtain" line. Then he makes a clear transition to the next section by a reminder of what is still to be done, so that the class may know just where it is. For example, he might say, "After a short interval for making notes or talking points over we shall have a half-hour of open discussion; and then, to conclude the meeting, Mr. Peabody will summarize what we have done."

At the close, instead of hurrying away, the tutor chats with individuals, not neglecting the shy and reserved

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ones who need drawing out. He asks Smith about his last cricket score, Jones about a recent decision of the Trade Board, Mrs. Brown about her sick mother. He gently teases the slacker, and seeks to put the over-conscientious at ease with himself. Or he holds a committee meeting to decide on the next class visit to an art gallery or exhibition, or the next picnic or social. In such ways he tries to share the students' outside lives, and to lead them to sample his. Then, at last, he leaves the building, detached and still debonair (if not too tired), the strain of class activities over.

### 3. *Difficult Cases*

In evening class work, in which many of the students may be adolescents, actual disciplinary difficulties may arise. This is especially likely when the students have been compelled to attend, by law or by the regulations of their business firm. The basic trouble is resentment and a sense of frustration, the students regarding the class-work as so much useless drudgery. In such a case, the teacher must strive above all to show that the work *has* interest and value, and that his capacity merits respect. Some group arrangement, advocated in the preceding chapter, might also tend to reduce the tension.

There are teachers, however, who mistake fidgeting for disorder, and worry too much about discipline. There are fidgets and fidgets, natural-outlet fidgets being quite compatible with steady working. Experiments with children go to show that repression of fidgets often leads to lower working pressure. Plenty of us fidget as we work in our dens at home. A puritanic severity in the matter is mistaken policy. Similarly with the

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chatty nonsense of girls and youths in class hours. Rather than preach a sermon, the teacher should allot one or two short intervals for free conversation (most minor appetites are soon satisfied), while exacting full application to work during the rest of the time.

Chronic individual misbehaving usually has a deep-seated cause, and is rare. The chances are that it is due to some maladjustment of long standing, brought about by a sense of frustration. An example is that of the youth who confessed that he wished to be the top dog in class rowdyism because he could not hope to shine in work, and all his life he had been beaten and despised at home. He was recommended to volunteer for duty one or two nights a week at a welfare centre. He did so, and the resultant feeling of satisfied sense of responsibility made such a difference to his outlook that he soon settled down into the steadiest of faithful-dog evening class members. Friendly interest and some insight into character can do much towards rehabilitating a thwarted nature.

### *4. Tact in Class Handling*

In dealing with unpunctuality it is important to discover the individual cause, whether difficult home or work circumstances, fatigue, dislike of class-work, shyness in the few minutes before work begins, fear of wasting time sitting doing nothing, or culpable slackness. In all but the last, a common device is unobtrusively to appoint the offender to the office of room-prefect with the duty of arriving at the class ten minutes before time to clean the blackboard, arrange desks for the lesson, give out materials, and the like. Pride in the position often produces the right attitude, and makes punctuality

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eventually a habit. Indeed some teachers purposely create a number of minor official positions to give occupation and responsibility to awkward and restless students.

As for infractions of discipline by the class as a whole, the best technique for overcoming them is good-humoured "chaff." But nothing is worse than to exclaim, "Gentlemen, gentlemen, please! One would think you had never been taught how to behave. I am ashamed of people of your age conducting yourselves like that." To see the tutor thus "rattled" delights the heartier students, who will forthwith go to worse lengths just to enjoy the spectacle. But chaff penetrates behind the offenders' defences, enlists their unconscious collaboration, and eliminates the risk of that bane of good atmosphere, a fuss.

There are few problems in handling a class that feels there is purpose in what is taught: because they have a motive, they work together without friction. G. B. Shaw<sup>1</sup> makes a strong point of this, because his own experience prompted the thought: "As to mathematics, to be imprisoned in an ugly room and set to do sums in algebra without ever having had the meaning of mathematics explained to me, or its relation to science, was enough to make me hate mathematics all the rest of my life." Frustration made him, in fact, a thorn in the side of his teachers.

The secret of handling, then, apart from the cultivation of a smooth technique, is to make the class aware, by both implicit and explicit means, of the reasonableness and value of its studies.

<sup>1</sup> In a broadcast on "School," addressed to Sixth Forms, given on June 11, 1937.

## CHAPTER XV.—THE TEACHER IN ACTION

### 1. *A Contrast of Two Tutors*

Two portraits of adult teachers, written by well-known men of letters, afford a complete contrast : that by Robert Lynd is typical of the failure, while that by H. G. Wells brings back to mind one who may almost be called the patron saint of adult teachers.

"There was a time," writes Robert Lynd,<sup>1</sup> "when, for a year or so, I sat in a classroom and studied heat, light, sound, and electricity. I never succeeded, unfortunately, in learning much about the nature of any of them, for a number of high-spirited young men with a pronounced anti-scientific bias—with a bias, indeed, against learning of any kind whatsoever—sat in the back benches and devoted their energies on the opening day to the manufacture of paper darts which they hurled at the head of the professor who was lecturing. He was an aged man with jerky movements and a jerky voice and a white beard that streamed like a flag in the wind. Strange that youth should find pleasure in persecuting age in this fashion, but it may be that the young men meant to be merciless, not to the old man, but to the professor. 'Gentlemen, gentlemen,' he would appeal, and then, with a wave of his tremulous hand, cry, 'put

<sup>1</sup> In his essay on "Heat" in *The Peal of Bells*. 1924.

## THE ADULT CLASS

them out, Jackson,' to the porter who remained at his side to help him with his apparatus. This, it must be admitted, was not an atmosphere conducive to sober inquiry into the nature of things."

Far other is the tribute of Wells, who writes of his master, Professor T. H. Huxley, "He was the acutest observer, the ablest generalizer, the great teacher, the most lucid and valiant of controversialists." It was as his initiator into intelligent method that Wells owed most to him: "That year (1884) I spent in Huxley's class was, beyond all question, the most educational year of my life. It left me under that urgency for coherence and consistency, that repugnance from haphazard assumptions and arbitrary statements, which is the essential distinction of the educated from the uneducated mind. . . . As I knew Huxley he was a yellow-faced, square-faced old man, with bright little brown eyes, lurking as it were in caves under his heavy grey eyebrows, and a mane of grey hair brushed back from his wall of forehead. He lectured in a clear firm voice without hurry and without delay, turning to the blackboard behind him to sketch some diagram, and always dusting the chalk from his fingers rather fastidiously before he resumed."

So much for university figures. As for W.E.A. and Extension lecturers, their portraits come to life in the students' comments reproduced in "Guide, Philosopher, and Friend," Chapter IV. of *Learn and Live, The Consumer's View of Adult Education*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> W. E. Williams and A. E. Heath. (Methuen, 1936.)

## THE TEACHER IN ACTION

### 2. *Some Evening Class Teachers*

The part-time and full-time evening school teacher may be glimpsed behind the following few estimates and criticisms made in the classroom while lessons were going on. They may serve the purpose of inducing us to portray ourselves in like manner. A one-hour meeting is assumed.

### THE KIND UNCLE TEACHER

*Lesson-matter.*—History of the Co-operative Movement. Anecdotal : story-like—few facts, dates, names : so only suitable for a first lesson, say to the 16–20 age group. Notes : muddled, shapeless, giving no idea of matter or method.

*Method.*—Preparation : frank, simple, with a sudden challenging climax ; effect dramatic. Aim pointedly stated. Presentation : the movement outlined from the Rochdale Weavers to the present day ; interspersed with personal reminiscences. (In spite of the disorderly notes, this part of the lesson was clear and orderly.) Comparison : without allowing the class any say, the teacher gave his own associations and generalizations—thereby losing considerable teaching virtue. Recapitulation : none attempted. Application : the teacher proposed a debate on the subject, for the week following : he dictated a list of books for further reading ; and lent out a number of books for certain chapters to be read during the remaining part of the hour, upon which questions would be answered in the last five minutes. Blackboard : little used and untidy.

*Manner.*—Twinkling-eyed, richly humorous, affectionately live. Natural, easy, sensitively watchful of the eyes of the class : good posture and position ; looked raptly interested himself, and a "character." Language : homely, pithy, of limited range but picturesque ; both emphasis and colour, e.g. "Eighteen million people sit down every day to drink our tea," "Rules made and framed on empty stomachs." Voice : quiet, lightly juicy, artless and engaging ; deliberate, with dramatic pauses ; pronunciation sometimes faulty, e.g. accent on the second syllable of Bolshevik,

## THE ADULT CLASS

industry ; also slurring and swallowing of words, " Birmingham " sounding like one syllable.

*Response.*—Every one intently following. At the close a hush and then an outburst of approval as after an artistic performance.

*Generally*—a pleasant elementary lesson by a smooth, practised teacher. Excellent for vivid presentation and arousing of interest, but lacking in logical development and exact detail.

## THE MAN OF ORDER

*Lesson-matter.*—Book-keeping, elementary : reduced to clear essentials. Notes : neat, methodical, helpful.

*Method.*—Preparation : neat link with preceding lesson : brief but unemphatic statement of aim. Presentation : by short steps, precisely recapitulated ; timing like clockwork ; logical, " pure." Comparison : adroitly drawn from the class and copied on the blackboard from statements worded by the students. Application : graded exercises set to be worked, with supplementary ones of greater difficulty for the quicker workers. Questions : pointed, crisp, logical. Blackboard : one prepared before the lesson, the other used during it : both with good lay-out.

*Manner.*—Quiet, very slow (too much so), with lack of emphasis ; posture and position good ; eyes cast down, rarely facing the class ; lack of brightness, drive, humour (though outside the class he is a humorist, he dreads losing dignity while teaching) ; air of repression and constraint. Language : exact, careful, scrupulous sense of word-values. Voice : clear, deep, not disagreeable, but monotonous ; many er-ers, and regular dropping of the voice at the end of a phrase ; words clipped and final, but stiffly correct ; a bent for the sepulchral.

*Generally*—a fair routine lesson. The teacher a capable man potentially, but hampered so far by nervous shrinking from letting himself go ; he has a high sense of order and logic, but is too level, and fails to emphasize the high points. His parsonic air due to mistaken distrust of himself and his sense of humour, which he should learn to use (positively though discreetly) as a valuable asset.

## THE TEACHER IN ACTION

### THE CASUAL TEACHER

*Lesson-matter.*—Budgetary estimates in business : for simplicity, one firm's private system selected for treatment. Notes : bits and pieces, purposeless.

*Method.*—Preparation : reading aloud of an interest chapter from a book ; somewhat vague, aimless, no link with past work, little better than padding. Statement of aim : none made, so that it took some time before the class realized what the teacher was after. Presentation : mainly comments by the teacher on the tabulated returns recorded on a cyclostyled sheet (one in the hands of each student) ; transitions abrupt, just "Next, estimates" ; many technicalities used but not explained, so that some members of the class were unable to follow ; main points fluently put but too abstractly for the class. Comparison : assumed, not elicited or explicitly stated ; class co-operation not invited. Recapitulation : none. Blackboard : scarcely used at all. Questions : few, with purpose to discover if the class was attending, not for developing the exposition or for reviewing. Application : dictation of notes for twenty minutes ; no exercises set, or questions invited, or opportunity given for students to make their own notes.

*Manner.*—Tentative, as though half talking to himself ; yet somehow attractive ; face, "boiled egg" with air of amused reserve, imparting an intriguing quality to the personality ; eyes small but alive, raking the class cheerfully ; posture very casual ; position, first sitting on the front desk, then inconsequently wandering round the room and up the gangways ; unsettled, dissipating attention ; fingers often fiddling with chalk ; all-round lack of definition of manner. Language : fair range, casually used. Voice : very quiet, occasionally indistinct, rather too fast, with little variation.

*Response.*—The class learned little, and was indifferently attentive, yet liked the teacher for something very human about his personality.

*Generally*—a weak lesson by an inexperienced but promising teacher, who needs

- (a) to plan his lessons with orderly steps and abundant illustrations ;
- (b) to introduce shape into speech and manner ;
- (c) to give freer rein to his natural vivacity and story-telling gift, not dim himself down apologetically ;

## THE ADULT CLASS

- (d) to put himself into the weaker students' place, not assume they already know the lesson ; and therefore explain each step in simple terms, and afterwards set practical exercises to work out ;
- (e) to encourage the class to make its own notes, and to avoid mere textbook dictation.

The teacher's strong suit is a charming personality, which will mature with experience.

## APTER XVI.—THE ADULT TUTOR

### 1. *Sensitiveness to the Class*

THERE is a *via media* in treating outside advice : ignore it and follow "nature," and you become like the curate's egg, "excellent in parts" ; obey it to the letter, and you may become a prig. Therefore the advice offered in this book is intended not to be taken in minute doses *seriatim*, but to be absorbed where and when required. Planning, for example, is a personal affair, dependent, too, on the given audience and topic. No one has the right to dictate about it. Again, discipline as a problem does not arise at all for most tutors of fully adult classes ; nor does testing. Like Molière seeking matter for his plays, the reader should seize his booty where he finds it.

Perhaps the central doctrine the writer has tried to convey has been that of the necessity for cultivating awareness of the class. This awareness must be directed at class needs, moods, and expectations. To talk over the heads of the class is as bad as to teach things too elementary. To persist in a fractious discussion when the mood of the class is averse to it is a grave error of judgment. To present one aspect of a subject when the class reasonably expects another, or a number of aspects, is to fritter away valuable interest. Still more, "The teacher must learn the rare knack of speaking when

## THE ADULT CLASS

*necessary*, always to draw others out in discussion, and to keep quiet often when it would seem to economize time to elucidate a difficult point. Time is not the most important factor in the student's education, nor a too ready supply of data or thought a contribution to the student's training."<sup>1</sup>

This sensitiveness to the class is apt to coincide with a marked friendliness on the tutor's part. Yet, knowing he has to be a kind of uncle, he may easily overdo the part, and become too easy-going and familiar to retain full class respect. It is a delicate matter to decide exactly where friendliness ends and familiarity begins. Indeed it is impossible to fix a line at which *all* the class will agree the tutor is wise to hold aloof. There are always a few who want him to be more melting, or more dignified. Our best efforts will not avail to prevent the moan of the effusive, "Mr. Smith is very nice, I agree, but he *might* be a little more homely with us," or the sniff of the offish, "Mr. Smith is all right in his way, of course, but I don't like him trying to be 'one of us.'"

The best we can do is to practise a helpful friendliness, always holding something in reserve, never becoming cheap; and ignoring the comments alike of the too open and the too oysterish. If the spirit of the class is with us, awkward individuals are of no moment; and any class will be with us if we guard its respect while winning as much of its unbuttoned cordiality as is compatible with that respect.

<sup>1</sup> *Progressive Methods of Teaching in Secondary Schools*. By Nelson L. Bossing. (Harrap.)

## THE ADULT TUTOR

### 2. *Leadership and Candour*

The adult class resents a teacherish domination, but does expect leadership. The tutor plays a part, whether he wants to or not, in remaking the life pattern of his students : he had better, therefore, regard the task as a privilege, and provide himself with a purpose not unworthy of it.

Of two tutors with similar teaching powers that one will wield the finer influence who has the broader understanding of life—of man, the world, nature, and things spiritual. Adult students incline to ape the tutor on his worst and on his best sides : from nothing are they more eager to seek inspiration than his spiritual outlook. What he respects, they will tend to respect ; what he despises, they will despise ; what he loves, they will love.

This feature of class reaction imposes a heavy responsibility on the tutor. It means that he has a duty beyond the measure of his solely intellectual qualifications. He needs some acquaintance with affairs, politics, the arts, philosophy, and religion. Class discussion cannot be arbitrarily enclosed within a subject-tight frame. The tutor is in constant danger of becoming regarded as the embodiment of a party point of view.

The necessity thus arising is not for the tutor to take sides and preach a doctrine. It is for him to be as impartial as he can while yet handling subject and discussion with personal conviction. Fair-mindedness in the tutor is the best safeguard—perhaps the only one—of class fair-mindedness.

Possessed of some breadth and depth of mind, the tutor

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finds there are two purposes to be kept constantly in view : the particular purpose of his lecture subject, and the ultimate purpose of all his teaching—that is, his general tenor. This latter purpose may be, for example, to train civilized men and women with a high standard of values and with democratic ideals. Often in practice, especially at the opening of a course, it is even wise to confide in the class, and to encourage discussion on both particular and ultimate aims. Success in this means the invaluable mobilizing of class purposiveness behind the tutor, with corresponding increase in interest and understanding.

In relation to his class, then, the good tutor needs integrating sense, and charity. These he is little likely to possess unless he is sincere and fundamentally modest.

Modesty reveals itself in a number of ways. Of these none is more important than occasional admission of ignorance. The good tutor is willing to admit making a mistake, to learn from students (who on some aspects of a matter may be better informed than he), and to confess ignorance, especially of facts. Bluffing is not only useless, but bad for prestige. A student asks a question off the tutor's prepared ground ; the class perceive the situation, and watch for the outcome. One tutor will brush the question aside, a second will snub the student for imputed irrelevance, a third will say he used to know but has now forgotten, and only the last will frankly remark, " Sorry, you've caught me out there. Even a tutor cannot know everything. I'll make a note of your question, and look up the point for next time. Please remind me."

Candid admission of this kind does no damage. Only the foolish student supposes a tutor to know everything ;

## THE ADULT TUTOR

and what little respect (if any) is lost on account of the tutor's ignorance is made up for by respect for his candour.

But worse than bluffing out a matter of minor ignorance is the curt rejection or guillotining of information from a class member. The tutor, talking on Galsworthy's story *Buttercup Night*, reads aloud a passage apparently to the effect that some cows are enjoying buttercups in a meadow. A farm labourer (in an otherwise urban class) points out that cows do not eat buttercups, and would probably become ill if they did. The tutor has only to crush the fellow to rise in his own esteem and lose that of the class. Instead she says, "Well, you know about these things, and I accept your word for it. But let us go back to the passage and find out what Galsworthy really says." Every one alertly follows, there is mutual good feeling, and the tutor easily shows that all the writer had said was that there *were* buttercups in the meadow where the cows were grazing.

Another instance. A tutor drew a quick sketch on the blackboard to illustrate the line, "Flame fishes of the night leap skyward," in Gilbert Murray's translation of the *Agamemnon*. The sketch showed the fish going blob-part foremost. A fireman in the class asked to be allowed to make another sketch, in which he showed the flames with points upward and blobs behind: he had had long experience of flames. The tutor laughed over his own error, and congratulated the fireman on the closeness of his observation. The class agreed that the flames looked still more like fish than they had done before. The tutor rather gained than lost from what might have been an awkward encounter.

No tutor should be ashamed to take correction on a

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minor matter, or to learn additional facts from a student with first-hand knowledge. It is quite usual for tutors to learn much from their classes—not always less than the classes learn from them.

### 3. *Discussion : Its Requirements and Value*

The sensible tutor aims at getting the best out of discussion, whether it occurs by the way or takes up the full second hour. Its American name conveys what it should largely be : a “co-operative review.”

Discussion should be kept objective, and (after the early gropings of an untrained class) continually to the point. It should have about it an air of maturity, lest it decline into futile chit-chat. If sub-groups are organized under student leaders, those chosen for responsibility should be judged by their own capacity for objectivity and relevance. Talkers or excitable or cranks or bigots or scatter-brains would do immeasurable harm.

There is an art in leading the discussion back to the point at issue. There is no need to be dictatorial, or always to be direct. A timely question or suggestion will lead the speakers back to the topic more adroitly. The leader has to bear in mind the special background of knowledge of each member, so as to draw in the silent with an appeal for information, discover the relevance to the general argument of some one's particular knowledge, and snub the bore before he stifles interest. Better discussion results not from impromptu, but from prepared practice, as where a topic is set well in advance of the meeting at which it is to be brought up.

Exercise in discussion promotes relevance, detachment,

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and orderly fluency ; it also teaches how to differ with others without engendering ill-feeling. At first, courtesy and respect for other opinions must be insisted on, to check the froward. Later one can encourage the exploration of suitable means to oppose or interrupt with tact and address, for the examination of the issue, not the exploitation of spleen. It is noticeable how in classes and in summer schools the untrained student will begin his remarks as often as not with gambits like " Nobody here can deny," " Any other view would be absurd," " As every sane man knows " ; and will confidently attribute to every party but his own the vilest motives, the most uncharitable intent. With experience, however, he discovers and finally comes to realize that other ideas besides his own can justifiably be held by decent people, and that the indiscriminate attribution of evil intent to all and sundry leads nowhere.

Discussion of the right kind, broadening, civilizing, ultimately making the mind both subtler and stronger, is impossible under the leadership of one who has not learnt to see himself to some extent as others see him. The humourless man, the crass egotist, or the unsociable fixed-idea man, is not the sort to create the right atmosphere. That requires the wisely tolerant man, of steady mind and plentiful resource.

The need for open-minded discussion was never greater than it is to-day. In many quarters of the world free discussion is barred altogether. The tyranny spreads, and even in this country, which may lay some claim to the name of pioneer in political debate, there are only too many people eager to shout the other fellow down. This was painfully illustrated by the " Bryant Affair " in the W.E.A. organ, *The Highway*, for January 1938.

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The Editor had the temerity to publish an article by a Conservative, Mr. Arthur Bryant, in which a case for democracy was made out *via* a picture of mediæval England betraying a Right bias, and concluding with general comments sweepingly criticizing the Government side in the Spanish Civil War. The article was long and persuasively written, but vulnerable to intelligent attack. It was opposed in tone to the usual Leftish type of article in *The Highway*; but as the W.E.A. works on a principle of discussion, and is officially non-party, one might have supposed that tutors and students would have leapt at the opportunity to invade the enemy's camp and demolish Bryant's argument.

Instead the opportunity that was seized was to demolish the Editor of *The Highway*, Mr. W. E. Williams, who was the object of a bitter onslaught from certain quarters. In the February number, along with valuable critical articles by authorities to refute Bryant's conclusions, appeared a brilliant defence of himself by the Editor, who had either to resign his position or rally to his side the great body of his readers. He won the day—and a triumph for fair-mindedness. Opinion swung overwhelmingly to his policy; and in the March number he published a selection of comments from the six hundred letters he had received, all but three of which had endorsed his actions. One writer quoted two Greek sayings: "The uncritical life is not worth living," and "When contradicted, stop your opponent by instructing, not denouncing him. One does not cure a madman by going mad oneself." Another quoted Alderman Joseph Jones, the Yorkshire Miners' leader, in the words, "Sometimes I wonder why great democracies have so easily and readily yielded to dictatorship. I am now

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convinced that one reason is that they have sought freedom from thought instead of freedom of thought."

Rightly conducted discussion, with fearless examination of all sides of any problem, is of fundamental importance to both education and citizenship. Every one taking up adult tutoring must at the outset get this truth firmly fixed in his mind.

### *4. Handling Students' Questions*

Allied to discussion is the answering of students' questions. To ask intelligent questions is not only to take an active part in class-work and to demonstrate an interest in the subject at issue, but is an important step towards thinking for oneself. It denotes the turning over of the subject in the mind, and an attempt to realize its basis and bearings.

But many tutors kill questioning (and the discussion that might issue out of it) by either taking up a contemptuous attitude towards the questioner or by answering in so dryly scholarly and documented a way that the questioner feels he is not being given a chance to consider the matter openly and for himself. This is particularly evident in literature and history classes. The academic tutor has at his finger-tips an authority to cite against any mere class opinion, and so he crushes any further comment. A student ventures an opinion about Shakespeare, and the tutor floors him with a sonorous sentence from Coleridge ; and there is an end of the matter. Such a tutor has never learned to think for himself, and cannot conceive why anybody else, short of a Coleridge, should do so either. He is an unconscious intellectual bully

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with a closed mind ; and he kills more classes than he cures.

"The spirit of 'we-ness,' " writes Professor Bossing, "cannot be induced by a teacher of aloof or superior attitude, whether such attitude is actual or merely assumed by the student to exist."

It is the capacity to create a spirit of "we-ness" in a class of adults that is conspicuously lacking in the unsuccessful tutor.

### *5. The Tutor's Attitude*

An aloof or superior attitude on the tutor's part forms an immediate deterrent to the disclosing of student confidences. In some instances this is no bad thing. The whining or pathological student can be a nuisance to tutor and class. But personal confidences are for the most part genuine and justifiable. Difficult home conditions, abnormal personal reactions to reading and class-work, nervous impediments to participation in social activities—these and many other matters a student will disclose to a sympathetic tutor, in the hope of diagnosis and advice. A helpful tutor will often succeed in bringing the worrying factors into a new focus, till their portentousness disappears. Typical of such student difficulties is that of being too shy to speak in discussion or to reply to a direct question from the tutor, or that of a divided loyalty between the class and domestic or working duties.

Nor is direct advice the only service the tutor can give. His very presence may be a palliative. A considerable amount of general class disability—nervous and intellectual—may be removed by mere contact with his

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personality. Indeed, many adult classes expect the tutor to embody confidence, ability, knowledge, orderly thinking power, balance, which will spread over them by a species of magic. He is a solvent for their sense of inferiority.

Figuring (as he thus does) in the minds of many students as father-confessor and confidant, the tutor must be the embodiment of tact if he is not at times to be a cause of stumbling. This is particularly so when there are opposing factions in a class. The soundest policy for the tutor of a new class is to be cautious for the first few meetings, to hold himself in reserve, to resist the temptation to make false moves. The incautious tutor easily falls into the hands of a single section of his class, and becomes an unwilling partisan ; he hears one side only, the opposite side suspects him of favouritism, and attendance suffers. The cautious man prefers to wait a while, till he has gauged whether the class is single-minded or sectional, before he frankly expands. He watches for the key people, and observes their attitude to each other and to himself. If he suspects faction, he must continue to treat the class impersonally, and to move amongst the key people with circumspection.

That is always the problem : to combine a disarming expansiveness in just proportion to a safe detachment. Fortunately most adult classes are easy to work with ; and most tutors have no greater unpleasantness than the occasional duty of repressing the vain and conceited student who treads on every one's toes.

Similar tact has to be observed in relation to political and religious sections, with a view to obtaining the maximum collaboration (not always great) of all parties.

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### 6. *Class and Tutor*

To return to the opening contention ; the first qualification of an adult tutor is constant sensitiveness to his class. How far he is succeeding as a tutor shows itself in the extent of his students' regard for himself and his subject. That tutor has failed who, five years after the ending of a class, is remembered only as a bore ; whose teaching is forgotten and personality despised. But the average adult class will retain for the competent and understanding tutor a very real gratitude and affection.

## CHAPTER XVII.—FURTHER READING

### 1. *A Short List*

THE following is a short first list of books for the evening school teacher with little time :

*Psychology and the Choir-Trainer*, by C. Henry Phillips (Dent). The title misleads. The author, who has an uncanny knack of seeing straight to the heart of a teaching problem, gives most useful tips on handling the adolescent, and getting practical teaching across. Written simply and naturally, it is a book to read and discuss : pithy, full of horse-sense.

*Technical Teaching in Theory and Practice*, by C. H. Creasy (Routledge). The title forbidding : the book a good general teaching guide. It contains ingenious diagrams, useful advice on lesson planning, a lengthy treatment of devices (e.g. illustration), and a record of the experience of a man who has inspected all kinds of evening schools.

*Your Mind and Mine*, by R. B. Cattell (Harrap). Quite the most readable and useful all-round first book to read on psychology. Helpful diagrams, photographs, historical approaches (e.g. the story of Professor Spearman's researches), summaries of recent advances (e.g. on intelligence) : written in a live, lucid style. The same author's *A Guide to Mental Testing* (University of London Press),

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is an excellent comprehensive guide to every form of psychological test—not only of intelligence, but of attainment, performance, and temperament. The Interest Test Profiles will set most readers off making their own.

*Tennis by Simple Exercises*, by S. Lenglen and M. Morris (Heinemann). The whole presentation an excellent model of teaching method. The section on breathing and breathing exercises should be read by those wishing to improve the voice.

To quote Mrs. Malaprop (with a difference), "This is what I would have a teacher read; and I don't think there is a superstitious article in it."

### 2. Psychology

The presses continually turn out more books on psychology, and in this embarrassment of riches it is hard to select. But here is a handful:

*How the Mind Works* (Allen and Unwin), edited by Professor Cyril Burt (all of whose books are good) from broadcast talks by several authorities in a series under that title. Especially helpful on mental images, intelligence, and psycho-analysis.

*Psychology for Everyone*, by W. J. H. Sprott (Methuen). A summary of the chief findings of contemporary psychology.

*Psychology, A Study of Mental Life*, by R. S. Woodworth (Methuen). The author is an American professor with a sound presentation method. The technical detail is not formidable. The manner brisk, clear-cut.

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*Educational Psychology*, by Peter Sandiford (Longmans), is particularly thorough on memory experiments. Very sound, and full of interesting statistics.

*Interest, Intelligence, and Character*, by G. H. Thomson (Allen and Unwin). More advanced: vigorously written by a professor of education who also has insight.

*Talks to Teachers*, by William James (Longmans): a classic—wise, readable, suggestive. (Needs modifying in places by the light of later discoveries.) The author was an inspiring pioneer of educational psychology.

*Judging Human Character*, by Hollingworth (Appleton). Gives hints for judging people on interview.

*How to Win Friends and Influence People*, by Dale Carnegie (Simon and Schuster). An American hustle-to-success primer: a soft soap Samuel Smiles. But amusing reading and gets some important teaching points home.

*Mental Tests* and *The New Examiner*, by Dr. P. B. Ballard (Hodder and Stoughton), are robust commentaries on existing and proposed examination methods. The second deals with the short type test.

Two good summaries of the results of large group inquiries are:

1. *The Successful Teacher, an Occupational Analysis based on an Inquiry Conducted among Women Teachers in Secondary Schools*, by Mary Birkinshaw (Hogarth Press). The inquiry was made by questionnaire, e.g. on how many women teachers are dissatisfied and a misfit in their job, and why.

2. *Broadcasting in the School*, by F. J. Schonell (The Central Council for School Broadcasting, Inquiry Pamphlet No. 4). A concise analysis of broadcast teaching methods, e.g. whether to have the class note-taking during or after the talk.

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### 3. Education

Modern ideas and methods of education, which inevitably affect our adult students before we get them, are readably set out in the Board of Education's *Handbook of Suggestions for Teachers* (H.M. Stationery Office, 2s.). A singularly sane and moderate programme.

*Learn and Live*, by W. E. Williams and A. E. Heath (Methuen), gives a broad view of W.E.A. tutors and classes as seen by the student. A shrewd, fully documented study, useful to all tutors and lecturers, and invaluable to the beginner.

For American ideas : on modern teaching method a sober review is *Educating for Adjustment : The Classroom Application of Mental Hygiene*, by H. N. Rivlin ; while on the learning process a comprehensive analysis is the *How to Study Handbook*, by R. W. Frederick (both published by D. Appleton-Century).

*The Art of Study*, by Professor T. H. Pear (Kegan Paul), is useful in putting the teaching problem from the receiver's viewpoint ; it adopts the legends, "To study hard is not enough ; but with method," and "Study is not a task but an artistic experience." *The Maturing Mind* (Nelson), by the same author, considers the whole subject of adult attitudes to further education, and the best means of developing the adult mind.

*Wireless Discussion Groups : What they are and how to run them* is a B.B.C. pamphlet of explanation and instruction for group leaders and listeners. The teaching principles are broadminded and sensible.

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### 4. Miscellaneous.

For a study of voices and the listener's reaction to them an admirable book is T. H. Pear's *Voice and Personality* (Chapman and Hall).

On logic and accuracy of expression two attractive works are *Straight and Crooked Thinking*, by R. H. Thouless (Hodder and Stoughton), and *Clear Thinking*, by R. W. Jepson (Longmans).

For English the first requirement is a good dictionary. Small ones are often inaccurate and misleading. The larger the dictionary the more useful and interesting it will prove. The reader should consult a number of dictionaries at a public library, and find out which best suits his needs and tastes : and then get regular access to it or buy it. A supplementary booklet of ready reference for pronunciation is the B.B.C. pamphlet, *Broadcast English : Recommendations to Announcers Regarding Certain Words of Doubtful Pronunciation*.

For practical handbooks on simple English, the choice is very wide. To mention two only (for those who have forgotten their school English lessons) : *English, Spoken and Written* (four volumes), by Dr. Richard Wilson (Nelson), and *A New English Course*, by A. R. Moon (Longmans). Both are freshly put, and not at all academic.

For films in education, a most useful introduction, with a good bibliography, is *The Film in the School*, by J. A. Lauwerys (Christophers).

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### 5. *New Trends of Policy.*

Lastly, there is the debatable question of policy in adult education of a non-vocational kind. The fight is between the "impartial studies" school and the school that sees in adult education the supreme opportunity for preparing to-day's citizens for to-morrow's world. A challenging exposition of the general case for the latter school is *Education for an Age of Plenty*, by Lancelot Hogben, F.R.S. (Life and Leisure Pamphlets, No. 7); and of the particular case of literature, *The Teaching of Literature in the W.E.A.*, by H. Edmund Poole (both published by the British Institute of Adult Education).

THE END





